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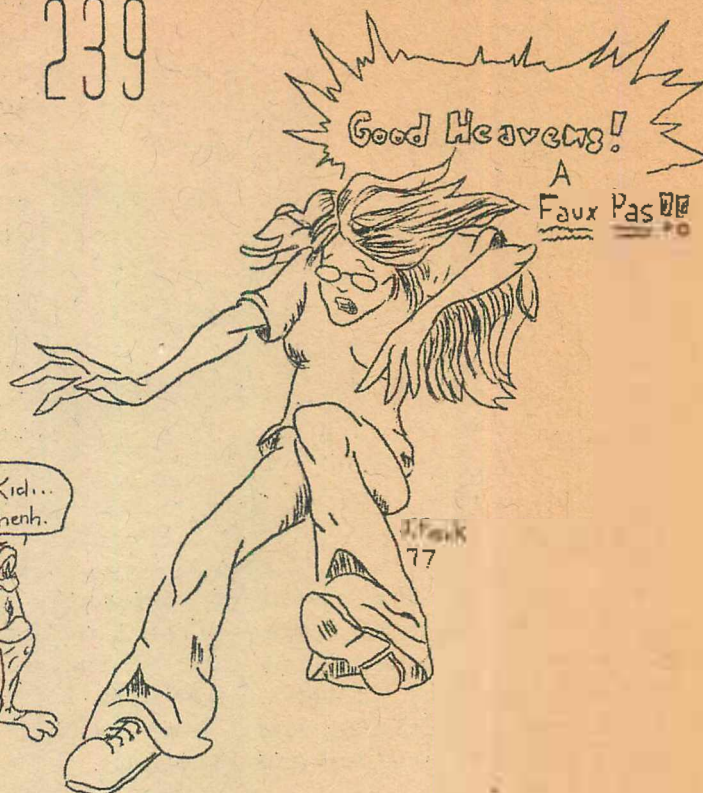
YANDRO 239

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I haven't checked the
status of the pound
lately, but we don't
have enough British subs
to lose much money on them.



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ARTWORK

Cover by DEA

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" 6 - - - - -	Robert E. Gilbert	" 27 - - - - -	Lyle Tucker
" 7 - - - - -	Jann Frank		

"Spells" copyright 1977 by L. Sprague de Camp

A small annish; this is an old fanzine, and tired. Maybe for the 25th Anniversary next year....or maybe not. However, I'm fairly pleased by having three contributors included here whom we've known less than a year. (About 11 months less, in Jann Frank's case - this is not Jackie Franke under a weird pseudonym.) Good people are still appearing in fandom. Denny Lien's column will undoubtedly arrive tomorrow - well, maybe we'll get another issue out in April. Maybe. RSC

NEW ADDRESSES

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Apologies for appearances in this issue, but I hope our friends will understand -- and newcomers to the fold please bear with us and we'll try to better next time. Time should be in greater supply next time, I hope. Buck cut nearly all the stencils for this issue, since I have been and still am up above my earlobes busy manuscripting on an ancient Babylonian romance of epic length. (I don't know how literary it is, but it certainly is, literally, of so-called epic length indeed.) As a result, certain foibles of typewriter and stencil and sundry equipment of, er, arcane qualities missed Buck, and he did not make the corrections along the way in the copy prep process -- the ones I tend to make without even thinking about it after this many years

of Yandroing. Some I was able to compensate for while mimeoing, and some I wasn't. All mimeoing was done at night, after a hard day of mssing around with salable (I hope) copy. So between my poor feet complaining and natural fatigue, there are bound to be more than the natural number of mistakes. I'm collating the issue at night, too, under the same conditions, and I hope I don't assemble too many pages upside down and backwards and out of order and like that.

Matters weren't helped by the incredible weather Buck describes in Rumblings over page. The blizzard cost me a good week of manuscripting time and some of the other bitter weather chewed up more. Often the temperature in our working area failed to get up above 50, and after an hour or so of typing not even my fingers could be kept warm by steady exercise, and my feet ceased to be among the living presences. This entailed fleeing to warmer rooms and thawing out, then returning to the frozen SW quadrant. During the blizzard I tried dragging the typewriter out into the kitchen and sitting in front of an open (and lit, of course) oven. But Babylonian manuscripting requires having at hand rather huge quantities of reference materials, consulted constantly. Dragging all that stuff out, too, got impossible. Whole thing was an icy disaster and we are well rid of it and how do you like you blue eyed but also blue extremitted boy now, hmm?

With the fates' assistance, we should have more artwork next issue, too. I didn't have any electrostencilled stuff done, so I had to select hand-cut art and do it at night and in haste, and didn't use very much, as faithful readers will note. But I tried.

Other than freezing to death and typing, I haven't done much this winter -- except survive, which seems like somewhat of an achievement, all things considered. But those activities don't really merit much of a chronicle or bear detailing. I mean, the fact that I have a glitch in my typer's capital B key and the recurring problem is a bitch of particular nuisance since I'm working on a novel prominently featuring the name "Babylon" isn't of abiding interest to anyone but me and my agents and the editor.

So, I shall resort to one of Buck's favorite tactics and quote you from various assemblies of cuttings and clippings and how's-that-again? esotERICA gleaned here and there. One of our favorite constant collectibles is the work of a cartoonist for the Ft Wayne Journal Gazette, but unfortunately editorial cartoons rarely transfer readily to the written form. Anent the recent saccharin ban, though, Lynch did a rather poignant little cartoon of adjoining cages full of test mice, one cage missing one of its little residents. His erstwhile cagemate was lamenting, "Poor Fred! And he didn't even like saccharin." To which the neighboring rodents reply, "My gawd, 800 times a day --

who would?" With a houseful of diabetics and dieters, I couldn't agree more.

I think it's all a dastardly plot of the Southern agricultural interests. They won't ban tobacco because it's grown down there, but so is sugar, so they ban artificial sweeteners. I detect a nefarious plot, at my expense.

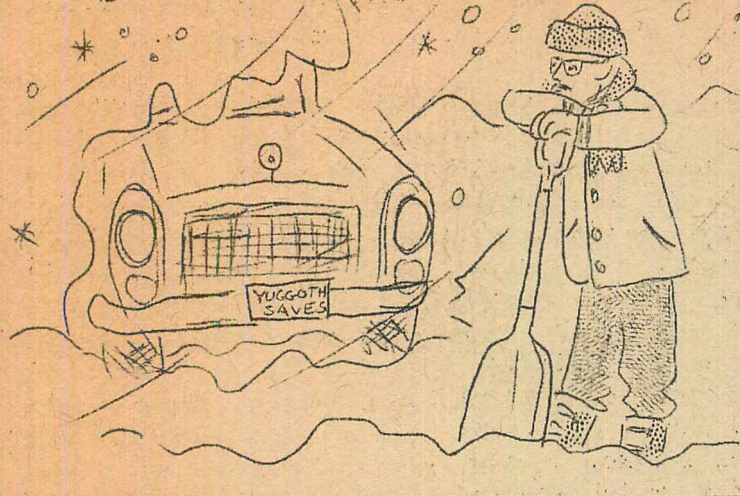
In another area, Kay Anderson liberated a list of radio codes in use by police and such in California, and I must say some of the code designations lead to fascinating speculations. I mean, from years of DRAGNET and following cop shows, everyone is familiar with 211 and 459 and Code 6 and so on. But there are codes for problems that never would have occurred to the average lawabiding citizens -- yet which obviously occur all too frequently in the policeman's not always 'appy lot. Such as a series called 918 = mental case; 918A = escaped mental case; 918V = violent mental case, all of which I'm sure the officers love to hear coming over their wavelengths. There are a whole assortment of codes and sub-codes for animals causing problems, such as being strayed, noisy, vicious, injured, dead, or biting people. (Actually, the code just says "animal bite"; it doesn't specify who or what, which gives lots of room for interpretation by some jokester on the call mike, no doubt.) The variety of codes for drunks are almost as many as for animals, which should indicate something or other, too. Some of the codes are so picayune as to created wonder, such as "ball game in street". Others lead to thoughts of 1984 and paranoia, such as "suspicious person" (wonder if that one gets sent in every time an sf con hits town?). Some just conjure up interesting little images, like "correct time" -- which you can radio for if both officers broke their watches, I guess; or a call to "give FCC call-sign". Now and then one has the eerie feel of sf in the making, as in Code 12 -- "patrol your district and report extent of disaster damage", I'm sure that's for something like an earthquake or brushfire, but it could also be for a bomb or, to follow current scare stories, germ warfare aftermath. Let's hope it isn't used too often.

Sidney Harris noted a number of things in his syndicated column that were of passing interest. Sometimes his material is strictly essay and philosophy grist, or his ever intriguing quizzes. Sometimes he, like many fans, collects pots of trivia of the isn't-that-interesting? school and glops it together into one lump for the day. Quotes like "If we could reclaim 70 million acres to productivity within one year (an area more than twice that of England), next year's population will have increased by some 70 million people, with no net gain to the world in terms of food." We can't reclaim that much, and I hope the compulsive we-must-feed-the-starving-billions fans take note of that reality; we can't even stay where we are by running our tractor tires off. That "Raagan adopted the same tactic as Lincoln, in dumping his expected running mate for a Democrat to broaden the base of campaign." That "more than half of all Americans now live on one per cent of our total land area." (But don't let them know; they might move out here and take up more vitally productive farmland. The endangered species are generally far more endangered by the expanding cities and suburbia than they ever could be by hunters, but that's another problem again. Just growing enough food on the remaining land is what's needful. Keep 'em crowded into the cities and off the plowed ground there, Clyde.)

And now, for a little horror story of how nothing can go wrong--wrong---wrong---, I give you a copyright item from the NY Times wire service, from Larchmont, NY. A Dr. Darnell, scientist with Rockefeller U, bought some material at a hardware store to repair the family's leaking dishwasher liner. He bought a GE silicone sealant and the family used it as directed. Since then his wife has fallen seriously ill and was forced to abort a pregnancy and endured the Lewistite treatment to counter arsenic poisoning. The entire family was, to some degree or another, poisoned, in fact. And only by the sheerest accident, after investigating, futilely, all other possibilities, did Mrs. Darnell take in the remainder of the silicone for analysis. Once that was done, her frustrated doctor finally found a reason for the symptoms. Mrs. Darnell said arsenic poisoning had been suspected, but GE had told her there was no more in the sealant than in a few shrimp. Unfortunately, it contained approximately 25 times as much, and her memories of "Arsenic and Old Lace" were verified. Hoping you are not discovering the same, not at all...

JWC

RUMBLINGS



Late again. I wonder if we are down to quarterly publication this year? I trust not. Partly, this delay is due to Juanita's novel (tho mostly it's due to my not getting on the ball). Keen-eyed readers will also notice a certain lack of consistency in the matter of capitalization of book and magazine titles. This is because I cut most of the stencils this time, and I tended to follow what each letter-writer did, without reference to a standard. Normally Juanita cuts stencils and is more precise about these things. (Any deficiencies in stencil-cutting can also be laid to my door. I don't

particularly enjoy using this IEM typewriter - ours courtesy of George Scithers - but it's our best stencil-cutter, so...)

On to more general topics. Has anyone besides me noted Boris Vallejo's preoccupation with horses' asses? I submit the covers for the newest edition of *FLIGHT OF THE HORSE*, Darnay's *HOSTAGE FOR HINTERLAND*, and Gordy's *THE DRAGON AND THE GEORGE* (a book which will be reviewed thoroughly in the next issue, but meantime go get a copy. It's a great book.) Anyway, that's three Vallejo paintings from the last quarter of 1976, all of them prominently featuring one or more horses as seen from the rear. Nothing from the front. (And all for Ballantine; maybe the problem is with the Ballantine art director?) They're all, incidentally, excellent covers, and I hope to see much more of Vallejo - including, maybe, eventually, a front view of something....

A long time since the last issue; I cut the editorial before Thanksgiving, tho we didn't get the issue published until late December. Since then, we attended Chambanacon over Thanksgiving weekend and enjoyed ourselves as usual. Over New Year's, we visited the DeWeeses in Milwaukee and the Passovoy's in Chicago, and met Sean and Jan Rigby. At the time, there were big plans for Sean to produce an lp record of Juanita and Ann Passovoy. Since then, there have been the usual delays which Juanita always encounters whenever there are plans for a recording. The record is still a possibility, but not an imminent one. (We went back to Chicago in February and had a lovely weekend, but got no forrarder with the recording. One of those things.) Gary Anderson visited in January, having persuaded the government that his presence in Indianapolis was indispensable. (Somehow, he never seems to be able to persuade them during decent weather.)

Which brings us to The Winter of '77. My personal problems started on Jan. 11, when I only got about 50 yards down the road before getting stuck in a snowdrift. I wasn't off the road; I was right in the middle of it, in fact. I have to be at work at 7:30, which is before dawn in this area at that time. After it got light enough to see what I was doing, I got bundled up, hauled Juanita along as assistant, and we shoveled out the car and I got it backed up the 50 yards and into our driveway, where it stayed until the next day; the snowplows came through in the afternoon, when it was hardly worthwhile to bother going in for a couple of hours' work. (Especially when I already had a full day's excuse...) Then on the 17th, one of the colder mornings -- -20°F -- neither car would start and I had to ride in with a co-worker for a couple of days. Not having a garage is hard on cars in this climate. Then everything was fine until The Blizzard. My problems began on Jan. 26. Those of us with any distance to drive were sent home from work an hour early, which was none too soon. I spent most of the hour driving the 8 miles (a fair amount of it sitting in line on a state highway waiting for problems to be cleared up ahead. It was an apprehensive wait; there were times when I couldn't see the pickup truck sitting 5 feet in front of me, due to blowing snow, and I could see the cars in the opposite lane also not moving, and gradually being covered with snow. I heard

that one of these southbound cars was drifted in from Wednesday afternoon (and Saturday, but our lane finally got moving again.) Once I got off the state road the snow was worse - there was a solid foot of it all across the county road in front of our house, with some deeper spots - but with nobody in front of me I could go through at top speed and get up enough momentum to keep moving. (A good thing that there wasn't anyone in front of me because visibility was still about 5 feet at times and I was moving at a fair clip.)

The next day, Thursday, the car wouldn't start again; I discovered that in my dash down the county road the afternoon before I'd cracked the distributor cap. We did manage to get in town that evening and get the car repaired, which was the last time we saw anything other than ourselves for 3 days. There was more blizzard Thursday night; that was when every road in Indiana north of Indianapolis was declared officially closed, national guard armories were opened up to house stranded motorists, etc. Nothing moved Friday; farmers in our area couldn't even get thru on tractors. By Saturday the snowmobiles were out in force, but nothing came past us on Friday...presumably the snowmobiles were doing emergency service that day. I didn't object to being isolated (Juanita did, though) except for the fact that we were low on fuel oil, and had to lower the thermostat in the living room, close off the office, and worry about running out entirely. (When the oil truck got thru Monday morning, we had about 10 gallons of oil left in the tank; we'd have been out before the day was over.) It was quite a storm; one lane of state road 3, couple of miles from our house, was blocked by snow on Jan 26 and stayed blocked until Feb 4. In the interim, traffic negotiated the half-mile stretch with caution. I was lucky; I only had to back up once because of a truck coming through in the other direction. A coworker had to run into a drift once at that point to avoid a collision.

During the extra time off work, I read a lot; it was too cold to do much of anything else. Couldn't type - one morning while the office was closed off, the temperature in here got down to 32 F; not conducive to much typing. But I did get all the 1976 sf mags read, plus some books, and below are a few Hugo recommendations. (Better late than never - anyway, YANDRO serves us as a sort of public diary and I want these recorded.

- Best novel - Children of Dune, by Frank Herbert (ANALOG, Berkley) I wouldn't pick
Shockwave Rider, by John Brunner (Ballantine) any of these in a
The Shattered Chain, by Marion Bradley (Daw) good year, but...
- " novella - Michaelman, by Algis Budrys (F&SF) these more or less in order of quality
The Magic Goes Away, by Larry Niven (ODYSSEY)
Piper At The Gates of Dawn, by Richard Cowper (F&SF)
- "novelet - Houston, Houston, Do You Read?, by James Tiptree, Jr. (Aurora; Beyond
Bloody Man, by Avram Davidson (FANTASTIC) Equality)
Mam Sola's House, by Edgar Pangborn (Continuum 4 - if it's eligible)
Overdrawn At The Memory Bank, by John Varley (GALAXY)
Ghost of A Crown, by Sterling Lanier (F&SF)
Fundamental Issue, by Phil Farmer (AMAZING) The novelet is the
A Penny's Worth, by Stephen Robinett (ANALOG) best length for
Weather War, by William E. Cochrane (ANALOG) science fiction (as
Bagatelle, by John Varley (GALAXY) I have said before)
- " short - The White Bull, by Fred Saberhagen (FANTASTIC)
The Second Soul, by Alan Brennert (GALAXY)
Answer in Cold Stone, by Stephen Leigh (ANALOG)
The Tomkins Battery Case, by Bud Sparkhawk (ANALOG)
A Case of the Stubborns, by Robert Bloch (F&SF)
- Best Editor - Ed Ferman, by a wide margin. Other possibilities would be Terry Carr,
Ken Bulmer, Ted White, Don Wollheim, Judy-Lynn del Rey
- I always pass on the drama Hugo because I don't see enough of the contenders.
- Best Pro Artist - Kelly Freas, Mike Hinge, Boris Vallejo, Steve Fabian, George
Barr, Eddie Jones, Bruce Pennington, Chris Foss, Jim Cawthorn
- Fanzine - Hmm. You know, I've actually read so few fanzines in the past year that
I won't pick one. Maybe this year I catch up. Maybe.... RSC

Ronaldism Revealed or The Joys of Sects

BY LINDA MICHAELS

In these days of increasing dissatisfaction with the rituals and rewards of traditionalist religion, many persons have found themselves growing disaffected from all varieties of religious experience. It is arguable, however, that no man can live without some spiritual component to his life, some belief on which to focus his non-materialist energies.

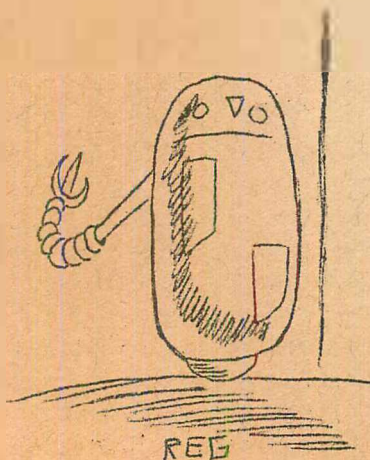
Certain members of the Indiana Science Fiction Association have purported to find this renewal of belief in a new movement, the central focus of which involves the veneration and adoration of Ronald McDonald. Obviously, because of the bizarre nature of this cult figure, there has been some polarization of attitudes against the group; the devotees maintain that they are On To Something, while their detractors insinuate that the "Ronnies" are, in fact, On Something (hinting, meanwhile, that it is selfish not to share).

Historically, the group claims to have received its moment of enlightenment in A.R. (After Ronald) 6, when -- in an ecstatic vision -- it was revealed unto a carload of Vegans* that Ronald was their means of salvation. Legend states that this vision, like the conversion of Paul, occurred on a road, this one outside Kokomo, Indiana. Skeptically determined to test this revelation, the group pulled into a roadside shrine (instantly visible to those of inner wisdom because of its discreet 50-foot "M") and found, to their considerable joy, that the invocation of Ronald's sacred chant ("Two all beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickle, onion, on a sesame seed bun") and certain esoteric knowledge concerning the Olympics gains the reward of free french fries. (cf THE WORD OF RONALD: "And behold, they pondered, and the answer was hidden from them, but pronouncing the Name, they understood, and got a freebie, and were satisfied.")

Ronaldism, from this insignificant beginning, quickly gained converts. Missionaries were dispatched to Burger Chers and Burger Kings, and numbers of the Faithful swelled (especially those who tested their faith at White Castles, But with Ronald's help, they ate and still lived.).

Miracles were performed, notable the Feeding of the Thousands on December 12, 1976, when a McManager found that he could feed two thousand customers on a pound of ground round and one small onion. The examples of several McMartyrs also won a following. (the most famous of these is, of course, St. Michael, who attempted to prove his veneration by wedging his body into the plastic carrying case of a Big Mac. As is well known, he succeeded in his effort, but was inadvertently suffocated when the carton was accidentally sealed. His body, still in its original container, is on view in the Temple of the Main Offices. Equally efficient in the movement, however, were the McMaidens, who mortified their pride by donning trash receptacles and standing in Temple parking lots, incognito.)

* Vegans are people who ride around in Vegas.



In its basic structure, Ronaldism oftens parallels other more conservative religious groups. It has its holy book, THE WORD OF RONALD, an abundantly illustrated tome which includes, besides the text, an almanac of holy days, two coupons for free Filets o'Fish, and a color-by-numbers foldout of Ronald Himself.

Each geographical area is administered by an Arch-bishop, who supervises the activities of the McManagers and missionaries in his district. Arch-bishops are also responsible for the recruitment and training of local McMaidens, whose exact duties within the cult are unknown, although perusal of their quaint slogan ("we really move our buns for you!") may hint at their function.

All Arch-bishops owe their allegiance to the spiritual leader, the Big Cheese, who resides in the Temple of the Main Offices, and who serves as an intermediary in appeals to Ronald Himself. This leader does not hold himself aloof from the people, but holds weekly audiences at which he distributes small, blessed "M's" to the Faithful.

Those who oppose the movement are known as Arch-enemies, while the Evil One (commonly supposed to be King Burger) is the Arch-fiend. The Faithful are known, colloquially, as Arch-supports.

Those who have experienced conversion,* and have received Ronald into their hearts (a drastic procedure, requiring a team of skilled surgeons) must undergo a somewhat bizarre ritual. They are required to disrobe in a McDonald's during the supper rush, lie across the counter, and allow themselves to be slathered with Big Mac sauce, while wearing nothing but a yellow shoelace around the left ankle. At the moment of supreme exaltation, the initiate is required to "arch". In some cases, by special dispensation or as a mark of special favor, the initiate may elect dunking in his choice of chocolate, vanilla, or strawberry shake. (Some controversy has arisen as to whether it is sufficient to be sprinkled, or whether total immersion must occur, but this is as yet unresolved.)

As one of the Faithful, the initiate has few obligations. True, he must intone the traditional chant ("Two all beef patties", etc.) whenever entering the holy precincts, and protocol demands that he abase himself before the Symbol of Ronald. He must follow the tenets of Ronaldism strictly, being particularly careful of numbers 1 and 6: "Thou shalt have no hamburgers before Me" and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's Big Mac". They are required to contribute to the Church on a regular basis, but are assured of change back from their dollar. Those who persist in the Faith have confidence that they shall not die, but will have everlasting McDonaldland.

Two religious orders are open to the Faithful. The Brotherhood of the Big Mac, a somewhat sinister group, reportedly experienced a scandal recently, involving the seduction of lay teachers (or, possibly, the laying of seductive teachers -- the rumor is confused). This may, in fact, be a healthy sign, as previous reports had indicated a somewhat perverse interest in Ronald's sesame seed buns. The women's order, the Sisterhood of the Shake, maintains a secret doctrine. There is some evidence, however, that members are required to "shake it", the "it" being (perhaps mercifully) unspecified. Besides these orthodox orders, there is a splinter faction designated the Side Order of Fries. (This latter group may be implicated in an incident at a Temple in which the McManager was immersed in hot oil and then ritually flagellated with cold french fries. Some, however, insist that the episode was a response to slow service and was a consumer action revolt rather than a religious event.)

In public encounters, the "Ronnies" are often undistinguishable from the general populace. Careful scrutiny, however, will often reveal the yellow shoelace subtly incorporated into the costume -- used as earrings, perhaps. Certain observers have claimed they find it easier to identify cult members by the bulbous clown noses devotees affect. (One must exercise caution, though, as many non-Ronnies exhibit such noses. The only valid determination seems to rely on giving the suspect appendage a



vicious yank. Noses which detach are those of Ronnies.)

Religious ceremony is kept to a minimum. Generally, the celebrant explains the mystic transmutation of the burger and shake into the essence of Ronald. The believers prostrate themselves before an elevated Big Mac. The celebrant then breaks off portions of the Mac and places the bits on the tongues of the participants, adjuring them to swallow but not chew. This is followed by a ritual swigging of The Real Thing, or, if none is available locally, a Coke.

Considering the phenomenal growth of this sect (which is rumored to now number in the tens, with additions daily from mental institutions, D&D enclaves, and special education classes), some investigation of the artifacts and personae of the movement may be in order. Analysis of the cult's view of Mayor McCheese, the Hamburglar, the Grimace, the Goblins, and Ronald Himself provide interesting insights into the propagation of the Faith. The following excerpts from The Metaphysical McDonald, a tract much circulated among the Ronnies, give an overview of the theology of the group.

"It is obvious to any informed researcher that the Hamburglar is a manifestation of Lucifer. Cast out of McDonaldland, this wretch can only stare in frustrated hatred at the scene of bliss he has left. He is also an apparition of death, as witness his whitened face and expressionless visage. Like mythological predecessors, he attempts to steal the life-symbols, i.e. the hamburgers, but for his own gratification rather than the benefit of mankind. This perversion of the intent of the items is constantly thwarted, but he is not wholly defeated, for evil always coexists with good in the Manichaeistic universe."

The author of The Metaphysical McDonald continues: "Mayor McCheese is a personification of good, the 'man' who follows the dictates of the right-hand path and thus benefits from the approbation of the god-head. His is also the role of Job, however, for he must endure the criminal ravages of the 'devil', Hamburglar. Mayor McCheese's incarnation as a cheeseburger is in itself significant. In this form he symbolizes the rounded, well-fed affluence of the good person who is not tempted into the paths of evil."

The pamphlet further indicates that the Grimace, with his childlike bumbings, is the personification of the uninformed, who has not yet received Ronald's Grace.

The Goblins seem to have a somewhat more sinister import, "Since their main function seems to be to search out and devour, they may symbolize the greed (a deadly sin) which can lead one into error. More likely, they are something along the lines of the Hounds of Hell, which harry the fallen away, tormenting and eventually consuming those found unworthy."

Ronald Himself, with his clown's garb, is endlessly allusive to the pamphleteer, who suggests that Ronald is the Fool of God, the Tarot Fool whose motley disguises inner wisdom.

A more negative interpretation has been given the Ronaldism relics by certain critics, who ask, in the publication Purity: "Can it be accidental that the hamburgers and fries are direct ideograms of the yin and the yang, the male and female sexual principles? Seen in this perspective, the accompanying metier of sauce and buns for the hamburger and catsup for the french fries seems almost obscenely Freudian."

The querent, who asked that his name be withheld, continues: "In this connection, one must refer to the blatant sexuality of the Ronaldistic 'come on': 'We do it all for you' had implications of eroticism only thinly disguised." He grudgingly concedes that "...when contrasted with the anal repressiveness of Burger King's 'hold the pickle, hold the lettuce' or the perverse May-December romance of Burger Chef and Jeff... [Ronaldism] is at least solidly heterosexual."

At least one scholarly observer purports to find a precedent for Ronaldism in the animal-headed gods of the Egyptian pantheon. This gentleman, in his unpublished manuscript, states: "Ronaldism, as a more sophisticated variant, has imposed on its principal figures the forms of processed foods. One has only to note, also, the curious but unmistakable resemblance between the Eye of Horus and the Big Mac in repose to realize the close ties between the ancient religion and the new. It is obvious, too, to any informed observer, that Temple personnel are interested in the preserva-

tion of otherwise-decayed remains, as witness the mummified hamburgers and rejuvenated fries often passed on to customers." (Ronaldism, however, despite the somewhat disgruntled comments of the foregoing authority, is an apparently humanistic religion, for its practitioners seem more concerned with their next meal than with an after-life.)

Can Ronaldism succeed as a viable and lasting religion? In the WORD OF RONALD it is written: "And the heathen shall tremble, hearing His Name. They shall fall to their knees saying, 'Yea, I have sinned, and my sin lieth heavy upon my stomach' and they shall forsake the competitors." If that prediction is fulfilled, one can easily project a time, not too far distant, when the laws regarding the separation of church and state will require that students be shielded from all hamburgers (some institutions will perhaps allow a moment of silent munching), clowns be disallowed (although teachers may be allowed to continue their similar activities), and the letter "M" be suppressed for school use.

Porthole - a hole in the left side of any object.

Transcript - a movable grave.

Saboteur - hiking in wooden shoes.

Opus 762

◇ SPELLS ◇

BY

L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP

The wizard of fantasy fiction

Has secret and sinister spells

To harry his foes with unspeakable woes

Or damn them to hideous hells.

He'll whip up a philtre for lovers,

Their loves to their couches to bring;

He'll summon a shade to locate a mislaid

Indenture, or Grandmother's ring.

But when on my acre I labor,

The spell I most urgently need

Would banish the dock and the wiregrass block,

The crabgrasses slay and drive purslane away,

The plaintains would bash and the carpetweed smash,

Would put the bad eye on the vile dandelion,

The chickweed, the rue, and the nimblewill, too;

The sedge it would ban, with the lace of Queen Anne,

And every detestable weed!

GOLDEN MINUTES

To begin with, Ned Brooks notes that THE SPAGYRIC QUEST OF BEROALDUS COSMOPOLITA, reviewed here last issue, is priced at \$2, not \$1 as I guessed.

SCIENCE FICTION AT LARGE, ed. by Peter Nicholls (Harper & Row, \$7.95) To be published in April, which is when some of you (maybe most of you) will be getting this YANDRO. This is a collection of essays which were originally delivered at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in 1975, on the general theme of "the interface between science fiction and reality". Yes. (Now, why, I wonder, does literary/psych jargon like "interface" set my hackles up while something like engineering jargon doesn't? Because it affects me more, since I'm a writer but not an engineer? Or because I know that "interface" is simply a trendy euphemism for "contact" while I don't know any alternate terms for "soffit" or "voltage"?) Anyway, the contents here are quite varied. John Brunner has by far the most entertaining (and favorable) material; he pictures science fiction and fandom as a small island of sanity in a world prone to belief in crackpots. (He quotes an observation from Prof. Basil Hennessy which is an absolutely priceless reference to the content of von Däniken's work; euphemism raised to a fine art.) Robert Sheckley doesn't say much, but is very entertaining about it; his comments on the search for the marvelous dovetail nicely with Brunner's remarks. John Taylor starts off well with his comparison of stf with scientific thought, but then - to prove his openmindedness? - he goes off onto the "challenge" posed to science by Uri Geller, and inadvertently proves Brunner's thesis; even scientists are more credulous than stf fans. (Not to mention Brunner's - and fandom's - howls of outrage that mundanes seem to think that science-fiction is synonymous with pseudo-science.) Edward de Bono may have a very perceptive article on "lateral thinking", but after he started off by saying that "Thinking and sex are undoubtedly the two most important human activities" I lost any belief that he might have any knowledge worth imparting. Ursula le Guin offers the typical English-literature argument that Art must deal with humans (not Humanity in the mass but humans as individuals) and must present "a moment of vision". I don't particularly agree with a lot of what she says, but she presents the case well (and certainly supports it with the quality of her own fiction). I don't agree at all with Alan Garner, but he produces a brilliant personalized essay on the psychological importance of myths. Thomas Disch writes on "the embarrassments of science fiction", and who should be more of an expert? Harry Harrison writes on how science fiction relates to change and "alternate lifestyles" as exemplified in alternate worlds, and does a good workmanlike job (the editor points out that the speech itself was full of fascinating interjections and asides, but that Harrison edited these out of the printed version). Alvin Toffler, as expected, praises science fiction for its ability to cushion "future shock". Nicholls himself concentrates on some of the problems of contemporary stf, as seen by a fairly typical (but friendly) academic critic. And Phil Dick closes the volume with an article on the importance of dreams, myth and "proper feeling". (He never says how much feeling is "proper", but judging from his letters to SF COMMENTARY it is feeling to the total exclusion of logic or much rational thought. Of course, I'm one of those individuals he would characterize as an "android" or a "schizoid" and he's one of those people I characterize by even less complimentary terms. So I'm prejudiced there - oddly, that's one case where the better I know him, the less I like him. When I had read nothing but his fiction, I thought he was a pretty nice fellow.) Overall - the book is recommended heartily to academics and recommended mildly to fans...it's interesting, but the average fan may not get \$8 worth of good out of it.

DEUS IRAE, by Philip K. Dick and Roger Zelazny (Doubleday, \$5.95) Aside from an occasional feeling that the authors were tossing in symbolism with a shovel ("Think we need another symbolic paragraph here, Roger?" "Right on, Phil.") this was a fairly

interesting novel. There are some Goulart-like touches (which I enjoyed, and attribute to Zelazny, who has an odd sense of humor), but basically it's an exploration of the God-concept (and, of course, of the nature of reality). Not exactly great literature, but recommended.

THE FANTASTIC PULPS, ed. by Peter Haining (Vintage, \$2.95) Reprinting, including the original artwork, of fantasy stories from the various fantasy, sf, detective and all-fiction pulps, with original publication dates running from 1897 to 1944. Haining has done a pretty good job of getting varied material by the pulp regulars; his "important" writers (Jack London, Stephen Crane, Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, MacKinlay Kantor) mostly started out in the pulps and became noted novelists later. ERBurroughs, Max Brand, A. Merritt, George Allen England, H. Bedford-Jones, Victor Rousseau, Ray Cummings, Dashiehl Hammett, Hugo Gernsback, David H. Keller, Edmond Hamilton, Seabury Quinn, H. P. Lovecraft, C. L. Moore, Robert Bloch and Ray Bradbury were all best-known as pulp writers (well, Bradbury went on to the slicks and Lovecraft was mostly an amateur, but they're both associated with the pulps). The stories themselves aren't all that good, but they're certainly typical, and some of them have an antique charm. Recommended with reservations to fans; a good book for anyone studying the field.

DOWN HERE IN THE DREAM QUARTER, by Barry Malzberg (Doubleday, \$6.95) Twenty-four short stories, with an introduction and afterwords to each of the stories telling how it all came about. I don't read Malzberg and I don't care how it all came about, but if you do, here it is. Copyrights on the stories run from 1973 to 1976.

COLD CHILLS, by Robert Bloch (Doubleday, \$5.95) And he's still being blurbed as "the author of Psycho" (Sharon, I thought better of you...) Nice author's photo; he's been putting on weight since he's been writing for Hollywood and eating regularly. Fourteen stories, original copyrights from 1968 thru 1975, plus an introduction and an afterword to each story. In the introduction, Bloch says "I'm not exactly keen on the and-then-I-wrote approach", and in the various afterwords he proves it, but the stories are good. (If you want the non-fictional Bloch, go pay an outrageous collector's price for The Eighth Stage Of Fandom.) Most of the stories feature downbeat and generally ironic endings; appropriate enough, considering the title. "The Movie People" is a quite charming story and not chilly at all, though. And "The Learning Maze" is a downbeat allegory. I can't quite feel that way about Life, though I've been told often enough by other people that they do, particularly after a personal disappointment. (I don't have disappointments; I knew what I wanted, got it, and am living happily ever after, and the rest of you creeps out there should be able to do the same, if you'd only shape up.) Anyway, "Maze" is a very good story, if personally inapplicable. You probably haven't read all the stories previously; 4 are from the sf mags, 3 from detective mags, 4 from men's slicks, and 3 from hardcover anthologies. Quality runs from fair to excellent, so the book is a good buy. Highly recommended.

THE SWORD OF SHANNARA, by Terry Brooks (Random House \$12.95; Ballantine \$6.95) To be simultaneously published in April, with a big advertising budget. Which I'm sure it will justify; it's just bad enough to sell extremely well. My initial reaction was that this is what The Lord of the Rings would have been if Lin Carter had written it, but that's a bit harsh. It's not a bad book at all, and if it hadn't been so pretentiously blurbed I would probably have regarded it as an average fantasy. What it lacks is originality, and that's not a curse unless the publisher claims that the book is "so outstanding that its publication becomes an event". It's not even that it imitates Tolkien too closely - it does in spots, but the real problem is that nearly all the situations, wherever they're borrowed from, are trite. The first story - whenever it appeared - about the coal miner who held up the collapsing tunnel with his back so his comrades could escape, was thrilling. But it's been told so many times since that Keltset's exploit is banal. When Gandalf went into the pit with the Balrog, it was a shock. Never mind that critics shouted "cheat!" when he reappeared several hundred pages later; the original scene was brilliant. When Allanon goes into the furnace with the Skull Bearer, nobody cares because it's obvious that

he's going to come back-- and sure enough he does, in the next chapter. When there is a brief - and awkward - description of Hendel thinking about home and family before the battle, it's a pretty good tipoff that he's going to get pranged; Brooks either saw too many war movies, or not enough of them....with a few more, he might have noticed the cliché. Not that anyone would have cared much, anyway; Hendel isn't described well enough for the reader to care much what happens to him. Of the entire brave company, only Menion Leah is very interesting; the rest are wooden dummies, moving through their paces at the author's whim, and the author is more interested in grandiose background descriptions than he is in the characters who inhabit the scenes he describes. Menion and Panamon Creel show occasional flashes of reality; the others never do. (And, if this was a Laser or Daw or Ballantine or Dell paperback, it wouldn't matter all that much; if not the best of the lot, it wouldn't be the worst, either. But as a "great fantasy", it's a flop. It tries consciously to recreate the impact - not the story, but the impact of the story on the readers - of Tolkien, and it misses by a wide margin. But it may sell very well to the people who buy The Omen and The Sentinel and other diluted mainstream fantasies. I hope it does; it's better done than the average best-seller, at any rate.)

REALMS OF WIZARDRY, ed. by Lin Carter (Doubleday, \$7.95) When Lin isn't claiming that swords and sorcery is the whole of fantasy, he has this penchant for baroque vocabularies and excerpting from novels, neither of which interests I share. Only two excerpts here - one from A. Merritt and one from Hannes Bok - but that's two too many. There's some good material, though. Vance's "Liane The Wayfarer" isn't all that scarce, but it's well done. "Quest of the Starstone", by the Kuttners, is interesting because it unites two separate series (Jirel of Joiry and Northwest Smith) and is a pretty good story in spite of the fact. Moorcock's Elric is one of the better sword and sorcery heroes. Richard Garnett's "City of Philosophers" is a good satire with a surprisingly modern ring to it. Hmm...and another excerpt; H. Rider Haggard. Plus stories by Dunsany, Lovecraft, a rare (and not too good) story by Robert Bloch, same for Gary Myers, stories by Cabell, Donald Corley, Robert E. Howard, Clifford Ball, and Roger Zelazny. A fair amount of the material will be new to most readers. Quality is acceptable but not outstanding.

STAR TREK CONCORDANCE, by Bjo Trimble (Ballantine, \$6.95) Gimmicky pb covers are in, these days; this one puts the index by title into a prayer wheel attached to the cover. Aside from the gimmicks, this tells you all you need to know about "Star Trek". There is a plot summary and cast list of all the episodes including the cartoon ones, a list of stardates, a lexicon of all the names and terms used in the series, from "A-and-A Officer" to "Zor Kahn the Tyrant", and several pages of ST art by various fans. A big book; 8-1/2 x 11 and 250 pages. A must for Trekkies (I know that's not the approved name; I call 'em as I sees 'em), of some interest at least to the bibliographically oriented sf fans (ST was a part of science fiction, and an interesting if not a major one) - and probably of interest to the academics as a specimen. Personally, I wasn't enough interested in ST to have all that much interest in this (though Juanita was), but it's an interesting reference and might prove to be a useful one, some day. Certainly Bjo has done a thorough job.

MYSTERY ADVENTURE MAGAZINE (Odyssey Publications, P.O. Box 71, Melrose Highlands, MA 02177, \$4.50) A reprint of the Oct. 1936 issue of the magazine. This was a variety pulp; this issue contains science fiction, horror, historical adventure, a sea story, a South Seas story, and a couple of detective stories. All of them are rather bad, but some are fun to read. Hesitantly recommended.

MONSIEUR, by Lawrence Durrell (Pocket Books, \$1.95) I suppose one test of a brilliant writer is to write about completely repellent people, and evoke the reader's sympathy. Durrell doesn't quite make it - I don't think anyone could, with that bunch - but he does make their collective idiocies seem interesting, and even possibly Significant. I didn't like it, but it's certainly excellent writing. Also quite definitely fantasy, if that makes any difference to you. Certainly not the sort of book I'd ever read twice, but interesting.

THE FARTHEST SHORES OF URSULA K. LEGUIN, by George Edgar Slusser (Borgo Press, P.O. Box 7589, Van Nuys, CA 91409 - \$1.95) Since I'm in no sense any sort of expert on LeGuin, I'm not going to argue with Slusser on this one. (Possibly the reason I'm not is covered by Slusser when he says that LeGuin doesn't champion rugged individuality; that "To be an individual in her universe is to be whole, and that can only happen when man accepts his responsibility as part of a balanced universe". I'd hardly call myself rugged, but I'm certainly an individualist; the universe can adapt to me or the universe can go hang. My adaptation to the universe stops after I've provided for myself and family. Which is maybe why I'm tremendously impressed by LeGuin's writing, but have no desire to study it or argue over its symbols.) Slusser seems to be providing a fairly standard academic analysis; I have no idea and very little interest in whether he's right or not, but if you do you should pick up the booklet - it's 60 pages of critique. Considering LeGuin's popularity, this might well be a valuable booklet for teachers of stf classes.

THE MERCENARY, by Jerry Pournelle (Pocket Books, \$1.75) These two books are parts WEST OF HONOR, by Jerry Pournelle (Laser #50, 95¢) of Jerry's series on the career of mercenary leader John Christian Falkenberg. MERCENARY includes the stories from ANALOG, and follows Falkenberg from CoDominium Navy recruit to probable ruler of a planet. WEST covers one of his campaigns while he's still a CD officer; it's told from the point of view of a newly-graduated officer who serves under him. Both books are enjoyable adventures; MERCENARY has the disadvantage of being cobbled together out of shorter pieces but on the whole it's quite successful. Both are recommended.

THE REAVERS OF SKAITH, by Leigh Brackett (Ballantine, \$1.50) Third of the Eric John Stark books and the conclusion of at least this section of his adventures. Stark cleans up Skaith, more or less, despite incredible obstacles, and is ready for his next assignment. Leigh is one of the best fantasy-adventure writers in the business, and I'll even read her series books (though I'd prefer more individual novels). The story doesn't suspend my disbelief a bit, but it's fun to read; Leigh's characters have character, an all too rare commodity in swords and sorcery.

CHILDREN OF DUNE, by Frank Herbert (Berkley, \$1.95) The blurb says it's the climax of the Dune trilogy; cynically, I wonder if there won't be more Dune books as long as they stay best-sellers. It's well-written; one of the few stf books about interplanetary intrigue that sounds at all realistic. At times he gets a bit carried away by insinuations and inferences, but on the whole it's well done and recommended.

CAMBER OF CULDI, by Katherine Kurtz (Ballantine, \$1.95) Another big thick one. This is another Deryni book, but this one drops back several generations to tell of St. Camber, a legend to the Deryni by the time of the first three books. Again, the main share of the book is palace intrigue, and again it's well done - perhaps not quite as well as Herbert does it, but close enough.

THE SURVIVAL GAME, by Colin Kapp (Ballantine, \$1.50) More intrigue and adventure, considerably less probable. I got bored with it before finishing it.

THE COMPLETE VENUS EQUILATERAL, by George O. Smith (Ballantine, \$1.95) 470 pages of classic engineering fiction, including 13 stories revolving more or less around the huge space station, originally designed to facilitate interplanetary communications. (The previous pb edition contained only 10 stories.) This sort of thing was the backbone of the old ASTOUNDING; stories firmly founded (well, more or less) on technology, not particularly brilliantly written but scientifically as accurate as possible. Smith was never one of my favorite writers - I preferred a bit more substantial characterization. But he's competent, and good at working out plausible engineering problems. If you want to know what the Good Old Days were like, here's a representative sample. (And, considering this as only slightly above-average material for its time, it seems much better than its equivalent today.)

A HOSTAGE FOR HINTERLAND, by Arsen Darnay (Ballantine, \$1.50) Nice background setup; the primitive tribes (with names like Ecofreak and Peacefreak) versus the super-tech-

nology of the decadent city-states. None of it is terribly believable, once you stop and think (and Darnay's explanation for his super-cities and their need for Hinterland helium is that that's the way it is and accept it for the story. I accept it but I don't believe a word of it.) However, it's a nice adventure, the characters are at least moderately interesting, and if you grant the initial premise they all have more or less rational motives. (I'm not sure I believe their emotional reactions, either, but then I'm not an expert on emotions.) Moderately enjoyable; moderately recommended.

THE TREASURE OF WONDERWHAT, by Bill Starr (Ballantine, \$1.50) Second in the Farstar and Son series. Not caring much for series, I skimmed it. It would seem to be not terribly serious (I hope it's not serious, anyway) but the stilted dialog discouraged me from reading all that much of it.

KIOGA OF THE WILDERNESS, by William L. Chester (Daw #209, \$1.50) Second book in this series - the first, HAWK OF THE WILDERNESS, was published by Ace some years ago. Originally, the stories were in BLUEBOOK and were one of the many Tarzan imitations which polluted adventure magazines in the 1920s and 1930s. Kioga is a little more believable than most of the other imitations - or than the original, for that matter. But not all that much more.... If you like this sort of thing, go to it.

WARLOCK, by J. M. Flynn (Pocket Books, \$1.50) A psychic investigator called in to solve a kidnapping. Lots of sex, some action, very little logic, and no characterization worth mentioning. Would be ideal for adaptation into a bad movie, probably for tv. (The sex is more implied than real; tv could handle it.)

THE FLORIANS, by Brian M. Stableford (Daw #211, \$1.25) The first two books in a CRITICAL THRESHOLD, by Brian Stableford (Daw #230, \$1.25) new space-opera series. The "Daedalus" is commissioned to go where all sorts of men have gone before; its job is to check up on human colonies, making sure they remain healthy, stable, human, etc. Stableford is well-liked by a lot of readers, but not by me, and I'm not sure why. The plot is competent, the characters carefully delineated, but somehow I couldn't get interested in them. Personal quirk, probably; try one of the books and see what you think of it.

THE SIGN OF THE MUTE MEDUSA, by Ian Wallace (Popular Library, \$1.50) I tried a couple of Wallace novels, got bored early on in both of them, and haven't read his work since. Possibly a mistake. Here's a new one out, anyway, on the theme of sophisticated intrigue.

SLAVE GIRL OF GOR, by John Norman (Daw #232, \$1.95) Another one about an Earthwoman who learns that slavery can be fun. Norman is starting to run out of ideas; this one seems remarkably similar to one of the previous books. (Of course I'm talking about plot ideas; he only has one theme.) Not that the sickies who buy his stuff will care about the plot. This one is also told from what Norman fondly believes is a woman's viewpoint; I suppose it could be unintentionally hilarious, but the odd scenes I read were simply dumb.

RENEGADE OF KREGEN, by Alan Burt Akers (Daw #221, \$1.25) Cheaper, at least. (Well, it's a smaller book, and the fact that Akers is a better writer than Norman is offset by the fact that softcore porn always is priced higher than it's worth. This is #13 in the Dray Prescott series, which is a fairly good imitation of Burroughs' interplanetary yarns. Akers has the Burroughs tone almost perfectly.

ICE PRISON, by Kathleen Sky (Laser #38, \$1.25) A thoroughly enjoyable light adventure. I don't think I believe in any of Sky's characters, but they're interesting. Recommended; don't take the plot about a harrassed prison planet commandant and a child rebel seriously, but enjoy it.

BRANDYJACK, by Augustine Funnell (Laser #39, \$1.25) Two stories about a light-hearted adventurer in a semi-barbaric civilization. Reasonably good, but there is a bit too much of the casual superman about Brandyjack for me to be very fond of him.

MASTER OF THE STARS, by Robert Hoskins (Laser #40, \$1.25) Our hero must foil an interplanetary plot. Not all that interesting.

CROSS OF EMPIRE, by Christopher Lampton (Laser #42, \$1.25) An innocent and rather green youth stumbles into intrigue and danger, and manages to win the war. About average for an adventure story; I've read worse, but I don't recommend it.

SPAWN, by Don Glut (Laser #43, \$1.25) Humans versus telepathic dinosaurs on an alien planet - and later, on Earth. The victory is mostly due to coincidence and luck, and the explanation comes out of the hat like a scaly rabbit just at the climax. Not recommended.

FINISH LINE, by Stephen Goldin (Laser #45, \$1.25) The sequel to SCAVENGER HUNT. Since I couldn't finish the first book, I didn't start this one.

DANCE OF THE APOCALYPSE, by Gordon Eklund (Laser #46, \$1.25) An after-the-collapse story, about average for the breed. The plot is a little better, but the climax is offstage, which pretty well negates the buildup.

TIGER IN THE STARS, by Zach Hughes (Laser #49, \$1.25) Space opera. Technically interesting, but I never can work up any enthusiasm for Hughes' characters. Nice cover - one of the best Freas has done for the series.

THE RIVER AND THE DREAM, by Raymond F. Jones (Laser #54) Barbarians on an alien planet; one not very hospitable to human life. Moderately interesting adventure story; recommended only if you have lots of reading time.

GIFT OF THE MANTI, by J. F. Bone and Roy Myers (Laser #56, \$1.25) Superhumans toying with the Earth. Nothing exceptional.

STELLAR SHORT NOVELS, ed. by Judy-Lynn del Rey (Ballantine, \$1.50) Includes "The Mortal and the Monster" by Gordon R. Dickson (an impressionable young Loch Ness monster who wants to keep a diver as a pet), "The Greenhouse Defect" by Andy Offutt (a nicely done science-fiction detective story), and "Oceans Away" by Richard Weinstein (first contact, between humans and intelligent octopi on one hand and aliens on the other). Dickson's story is charming, Offutt's is very well handled, and I guess two out of three isn't a bad average. Recommended.

NEW WRITINGS IN SF #24, ed. by Ken Bulmer (Corgi, 40p) The longest-running, and current NEW WRITINGS IN SF #25, ed. by Ken Bulmer (Corgi, 50p) recently the best, series of original-story anthologies. #24 has six short stories and 3 vignettes; #25 has 9 short stories. As it happens, there are no outstanding stories in this lot, but there aren't any really bad ones, either; they're equivalent to a couple of average sf mags. Recommended.

THE BEST OF C. M. KORNBLUTH, ed. by Fred Pohl (Ballantine, \$1.95) And the best of Kornbluth is as good as the best of anyone. This gives you the two classics of future degeneration, "The Little Black Bag" and "The Marching Morons", the vampiric variation of "The Mindworm", my favorite wry comment on history, "The Only Thing We Learn", "The Rocket of 1955" (outdated but still an excellent commentary on the patriotic con-man), and "Two Dooms", the ultimate novelet of alternate worlds and the idea that getting rid of our present problems will save the world. Kornbluth loved irony, and perhaps a majority of the stories in here have an ironic ending. It might make for depressing reading if you go straight through it, but read a few at a time; they're brilliant work. In addition to those mentioned above, the volume includes "The Words of Guru" (not one of anyone's best), "The Adventurer" (how not to manipulate political forces), "The Luckiest Man In Denv", "The Silly Season", "The Remorseful", "Gomez" (one of the few in which the hero wins against city hall), "The Advent On Channel 12", "The Last Man Left In The Bar", "With These Hands", "Shark Ship", "Friend To Man", "The Altar At Midnight", and "Dominoes". Original publication from 1941 to 1968. Get a copy if you have to pass up everything else.

THE YEAR'S BEST FANTASY STORIES: 2, ed. by Lin Carter (Daw #205, \$1.25) On the whole, you can get more good fantasy out of any random issue of F&SF. Tanith Lee's "The

Demoness" is interesting, Thomas Burnett Swann's "The Night of the Unicorn" is a pleasant little myth, de Camp's "The Lamp From Atlantis" is enjoyable, Avram Davidson's "Milord Sir Smiht, The English Wizard" is good (but not nearly as good as a couple of other stories in the same series) and Pat McIntosh's "Cry Wolf" is a pretty fair first chapter for a fantasy novel, though not much of a story on its own. Otherwise you have Paul Spencer, Gary Myers, Lin Carter, Clark Ashton Smith, Walter C. DeBill, Jr. and C. A. Cador, all of whom I could easily have done without. There's even a bad Fritz Leiber story; they happen fairly regularly, but good Fritz Leiber stories happen just as often. If you want to pay the price for 5 mediocre to good stories and a lot of garbage...

FAREWELL TO YESTERDAY'S TOMORROW, by Alexei Panshin (Berkley, \$1.25) The first collection of Alex's short stories, I believe. 13 stories, 200 pages, small print. Hmm; well, 12 stories and 1 essay. I don't think much of Alex as a critic, but he's a good writer, most of the time, though a bit overfond of allegory. Try this and see what you think.

BUY JUPITER, by Isaac Asimov (Fawcett, \$1.50) I reviewed the hardcover awhile back. It's a good book, though Asimov's commentary on his stories may well be better than the stories themselves. (I've always thought that, like Silverberg, Asimov's non-fiction is better in most cases than his fiction.) Recommended.

THE HORROR CHAMBERS OF JULES DE GRANDIN, by Seabury Quinn (Popular Library) Another volume in Popular Library's complete collection of Jules de Grandin stories. De Grandin was an occult French version of Sherlock Holmes, and the stories have a certain "slickness" not normally associated with early 1930s pulps. Even though I don't particularly like series, these are enjoyable enough if one doesn't read very many at a sitting. (With the current rash of occult movies, it would seem that de Grandin might be made into a profitable film, or perhaps a tv series.)

THE UNDEAD, ed. by James Dickie (Pocket Books, \$1.95) An assortment of vampire stories. "Dracula's Guest" by Bram Stoker (a short story that was originally a chapter of the novel), "For The Blood Is The Life" by F. Marion Crawford (an excellent mood piece), "The End of the Story" by Clark Ashton Smith (a good and fairly straight - for Smith - tale of the vampire's erotic lure), "The Death of Ilalotha" by Smith (one of Smith's more common exotic fantasies, lovingly sprinkled with the most exotic terms he could find), "The Tomb of Sarah", by F. G. Loring (standard and unimpressive vampire story), "Revelations In Black" by Carl Jacobi (an original idea, but overly melodramatic and a trifle silly-sounding today), "The Room In The Tower" by E. F. Benson (a more standard approach, but well done), "The Death of Halpin Frayser" by Ambrose Bierce (a thoroughly strange story - customary for Bierce) "The True Story of a Vampire" by Eric, Count Stenbock (a creaky story rather typical of the turn of the century), "The Hound" by H. P. Lovecraft (not precisely vampiric, and overwritten as is the worst of Lovecraft), "When It Was Moonlight" by Manly Wade Wellman (if one must put real people such as Poe into one's fiction, I suppose this is as good a way to do it as any), "The Canal" by Everil Worrell (a fairly original treatment), and "The Old Man's Story" by Walter Starkie (which reads more like something written - rather badly - in 1893 instead of 1933). Overall, an entire book devoted to vampire stories seems a bit limited, but there's a fair assortment of good, bad, and indifferent ones in here.

THE 50-METER MONSTERS AND OTHER HORRORS, ed. by Roger Elwood (Archway, \$1.25) A juvenile horror anthology. "The Spider Ring" by Howard Goldsmith, is notable mostly for its lack of logic or motivation; things happen, and that's that. "The Museum" by Matt Christopher, is better; the protagonist is pretty much cardboard, but the evil is reasonably horrifying. "The Most Horriblest Monster" by Arthur Tofte, is an interesting if rather bland story idea, not all that well handled. The title story by Nick Anderson is an incredibly dumb story; evidently the author figured that mere kids would never notice his lapses in logic. (Maybe he didn't notice them himself.) "The Whispering Sea" by Ward Smith, is a fairly elementary story of possession. "Feeding Time" by Dave Bischoff and Chris Lampton, is amateurish in spots, but at least gives a fair variation of the vampire story. Overall; don't bother with this book.

ELRIC OF MELNIBONE, by Mike Moorcock (Daw #214, \$1.25) The first 5 books
THE SAILOR ON THE SEAS OF FIRE, by Moorcock (Daw #220, \$1.25) in chronological
THE WEIRD OF THE WHITE WOLF, by Moorcock (Daw #233, \$1.25) order of the Elric
series. Two have been enlarged from previous publication under other titles, while
SAILOR is new. When I first read Elric, I thought he was perhaps the most original
sword-and-sorcery hero since the form was invented. By now, with endless new books,
reprintings, reissues, revisions, I am thoroughly sick of him. But I recall my
original reaction, back when he first appeared in SCIENCE FANTASY #47, in 1961. So
get the first book, anyway. Unless you're a series fan you'll get tired of the
whole thing eventually, but it's fun for awhile.

THE JEWEL IN THE SKULL, by Mike Moorcock (Daw #225, \$1.25) First in the Dorian
Hawkmoon series, reprinted in an "authorized" edition. Dorian didn't appear until
I'd got pretty tired of Moorcock's swords and sorcery, so I could never work up
much interest in him. I guess it's competent s&s.

STAND ON ZANZIBAR, by John Brunner (Ballantine, \$1.95) Reprint of one of the best
novels science fiction ever produced. If you haven't read it yet, do so.

THE DYING EARTH, by Jack Vance (Pocket Books, \$1.25) Reprint of one of the classic
fantasies of all time. Ignore the ridiculous Hildebrandt cover and get the book if
you don't already have an earlier edition. These stories are among the most fascinat-
ing I've ever read.

THE EYES OF THE OVERWORLD, by Jack Vance (Pocket Books, \$1.50) This was an attempt
to repeat the success of Dying Earth by writing another series of stories with the
same background. It didn't work. I'm not sure what magic was in the first book, but
none of it transferred to the second. Not recommended.

SOME OF YOUR BLOOD, by Theodore Sturgeon (Ballantine, \$1.50) A too-seldom reprinted
novel about vampirism as sexual sublimation; it's an excellent if rather grisly
book, and highly recommended. Maybe more people will read it this round, now that
sanitized sex and occultism have become best-sellers. (This is too realistic to
be a best-seller.)

FLIGHT OF THE HORSE, by Larry Niven (Ballantine, \$1.50) Another reprint of one of
Niven's collections of short stories. Must be popular...well, it's good enough. 7
stories - all worth reading, but I assume my readers have already read them.

NAKED TO THE STARS, by Gordon R. Dickson (Daw #227, \$1.50) One of Dickson's books
on future war; previously published by Ace, I think. (It's late and I don't feel
like going to look it up. Previously published by somebody, anyway.) Competent; not
outstanding.

THE DREAM QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH, by H. P. Lovecraft (Ballantine, \$1.50) Another
reprint of this collection of Lovecraft's less typical fantasies. Worth the money
if you don't have an earlier edition.

THE KING OF ELFLAND'S DAUGHTER, by Lord Dunsany (Ballantine, \$1.95) Reprint of a
classic fantasy that I never liked very well.

RIVERTOWN RISK, by Joe L. Hensley (Doubleday Crime Club, \$5.95) The protagonist
this time is a small-town judge (write about what you know) who is facing reelect-
ion, trying the county political boss for murder, and worrying about his bailiff
who got killed by the drug interests. I assume the background of the courtroom is
accurate; it sounds that way, and while I don't hang around courtrooms much, Joe
does. I didn't guess the villain ahead of time - I don't read that many mysteries -
but I did figure out how the judge was going to foil him (mostly because I kept
wondering why such a point had been made about an apparently non-essential item).
It's a very entertaining story and recommended, though perhaps I'm prejudiced be-
cause of the character in it named Coulson. (And I did love that line on page 86,
Joe.) Anyway, the judge is an interesting enough character so that I worried a bit
about him even though I knew he was going to come out all right.

NOTHING BUT A DRIFTER, by Lee Hoffman (Doubleday, \$5.95) A non-violent western? I was intrigued by the fact that Lee's tough-guy hero gets by without shooting anybody in this one. Unusual for western fiction; probably closer to fact than the average shoot-em-up. There's still enough he-man action to keep the typical western reader happy (unless he's one of the typical western readers who approves of Louis L'Amour's MCP - Male Chauvinist Puncher - types). All in all, a pretty good book.

MISUNDERSTOOD ANIMALS, by Alice Hopf (McGraw-Hill) Hmm. No list price shown on the book. Probably around \$6, though; it's skinny, but it has photographs. This is a juvenile that tries to allay some of the misconceptions about "dangerous" animals; killer whales, octopi, snapping turtles, porcupines, wolverines, pigs, pumas, dholes, etc. (I became pro-wolverine after reading a novel titled Carcajou - author long since forgotten - in the fifth grade or thereabouts. Of course, I was becoming pro-Benedict Arnold at the same time, so maybe that doesn't mean much, except that I was a weird kid.) This is a good, sensible book; a trifle superficial for the intelligent adult (but how many of them are there?) but a pretty good start for teaching someone in the early teens that what he/she sees on tv about wild animals is rarely fact. (Incidentally, the misconception about pigs isn't that they are dangerous, but that they're dirty and gluttonous. They are dangerous; you don't go up and pat a full-grown pig like you would a dairy cow, unless you're prepared to lose a finger or two, or unless the pig is used to being handled.) Recommended for birthdays, Christmases, or whatever time you need a gift.

WRITING RACKETS, by Robert Byrne (remaindered) This covers, in fairly hilarious style, the various mail-order writing schools (including a couple I never heard of before) and, in a short final section, the vanity presses. As the author points out, there have been other exposés of the vanity publishers, but nobody else has gone after the schools. He is also careful to point out that his quarrel with the writing schools is not with their ability to teach writing: "Teaching the mechanics of writing can be done fairly well by mail." What he objects to is their claims that they can teach people how to make a living at writing, which is not quite the same thing. He also pokes a few holes in their claims for the "status" of writers, & students' desire for companionship and new friends to alleviate their boredom. (The desire is certainly real; judging from my stint as secretary of SFWA, at least a third of the people who join do so because they want to be a part of a group and mingle with their "peers". I didn't, so I dropped out as soon as being an officer got to be too much trouble.) Burns also gets in a few of the standard tips - which everyone in fandom knows anyway - about what writers should do. (And makes one minor error - in mentioning that one of the advantages of living in New York City is the ability to meet editors personally, he says "Clearly, kinship with editors cannot be built through the mails..." Well, not through correspondence-school mails, no. On the other hand, I've become fairly well-known to a lot of editors through the mails....) Look for the book; it's a joy to read.

BIOGRAFFITI, by John M. Burns (Quadrangle, \$6.95) Burns is a lepidopterist with a wacky sense of humor, and the book is a collection of strange and wonderful poems, mostly about animals. Puns abound. (porcupines playing "copse and robbers", the evolution of bats spoken of as "with malleus aforethought", snakes go "from infra-red to ultraviolet", etc.) One of the few books of humorous verse with a glossary in the back to explain some of the puns....and I found it necessary to refer to the glossary more than once. It's a small book, just over 100 pages, but for lovers of natural history and humor, it's worth the price. And it's not likely to come out in paperback. Highly recommended.

HISTORY OF THE ORDER OF ASSASSINS, by Erno Franzius (remaindered) I got this some time back - like maybe 3 years - and John Miesel finally threatened that if I didn't read it he was going to come up and take it away from me. So I read it... Very good straight history of the Assassin cult - the various schisms in the Moslem religious hierarchy are at times covered so rapidly that they're hard to follow, but it can be done. The Assassins still exist, incidentally; they're followers

of the Aga Khan. (One of my favorite comments comes near the end of the book, where the author mentions attending an Assassin rite. "The ceremony...was concluded with the Assassin Boy Scout band playing 'Way Down Upon The Swanee River'." Yes.) A very interesting book; you'll probably have to haunt the used-book stores to pick up a copy now.

FROM THE LAND AND BACK, by Curtis Stadtfeld (remaindered) Stadtfeld was born on a family farm in Michigan and is now an English instructor at Eastern Michigan University. All the time I was reading this I kept thinking of Joe Sanders, who was born on a family farm in Indiana and is now an English instructor at Lakeland Community College in Ohio. (You ought to read this, Joe. And then /a/ give me your comments on it, and /b/ write one of your own.) The book is what it's really like to live on a farm. Some of it is familiar, but I was 5 years old when Dad lost his farm in the Depression, and living on 5 acres at a lake resort is not quite the same thing; a lot of my "farm" memories are secondhand, from Dad. (But they were enough to convince me that I wanted to live in the country and I did not under any circumstances want to be a farmer. I'm too lazy.) If anything, Stadtfeld errs on the side of nostalgia, but that's hard to avoid. The long dreary periods of country life are difficult to describe - it's easy to describe something happening, but how do you describe nothing happening? For weeks at a time? The change to machinery, which came after World War II for the most, and which is gradually killing family farms, is graphically described. It's a good book, and as far as I can tell from my rented farmhouse and infrequent contacts with farmers, a very accurate one. Go look for a copy.

STAR-SPANGLED KITSCH, by Curtis F. Brown (Universe) This was a gift from the Miesels, so I don't know what it cost. It's an 8-1/2 x 11 book, 200 pages, filled with illustrations of the weirder aspects of American culture. It is also absolutely hilarious. (This is not just my own opinion; I took it along on a trip to Chicago and after one small dinner-party, Corinna Frank wouldn't let us leave until she finished reading the book. Others were equally entranced.) Everyone can have his own favorites; mine came in the sexual, marriage, and - oddly - religious kitsch. (And I disagreed with the author on some points; a bourbon bottle shaped like Andy Jackson is far too appropriate to be kitsch.) But the plastic crucifixion lit by a flashing red light like unto a police car, the bathmat studded with foam-rubber breasts, the big-eyed children (or cats, or dogs, or gophers) staring out from bad reproductions of worse paintings, the Classics Illustrated version of "The Iliad" - those are definitely kitsch.

THE MAKING OF SPACE: 1999, by Tim Heald (Ballantine, \$1.95) Background on the show, and lots of cozy little personal glimpses, all done under the erroneous assumption that it's a great popular series. Heald isn't quite as bad as the script writers, but he comes close. If you really want to know any more about this turkey, here it is.

THE CREATION OF KING KONG, by Bruce Bahrenburg (Pocket Books, \$1.75) Background on the new Kong (which I have no particular interest in seeing). It's an acceptable job of writing, though it doesn't come close to the big Ballantine book on the original movie. (That one was history; this is publicity, and the difference shows.) Lots of stills from the movie and the usual production details and human interest features, alternated very professionally. I don't know if the writing is better than Heald's or if Bahrenburg just had better material to work with, but it's okay.

THE NEW HANDBOOK OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, by Richard Burack with Fred J. Fox (Ballantine, \$1.95) A new revised edition. I note that cromolyn sodium still isn't listed, either by its generic name or the brand name of Aarane; considering the asthma remedies included, it seems an important omission. But this can't cover everything and it does cover a lot of drugs; what they are and what their side effects may be, along with the authors' opinion of needed reforms in drug prescriptions. (Since we have our own PDR now, we have less need for the drug information - but not too many people are going to have a doctor who reads their fanzine, so PDRs will remain scarce and this handbook can be very useful.) Recommended.

LOST CITIES AND FORGOTTEN TRIBES, ed. by Richard F. Dempewolf (Pocket Books, \$1.95) A series of articles originally published in SCIENCE DIGEST - though, according to the editor, the aim from the start was eventual book publication. They are listed as "science mysteries" - archaeological mysteries, mostly. And some of them aren't all that mysterious, except in the popular imagination. Authors include Daniel Cohen, L. Sprague de Camp, and Barbara O'Connell Ford (who account for 17 articles among them) and 12 other authors who did the other 14 articles. There are articles on the Olmec heads, the Nazca figures, the Nag Hammadi manuscripts, the search for Camelot, the Etruscans, the Poverty Point mounds, an ancient Changsha tomb, and a three-chapter section on archaeological crime (discoveries of ancient murders, the looting and killing now going on over Meso-American artifacts, and one lovely chapter on "Crackpots And Forgeries"; from the gentleman who announced to a museum curator that he was the god Amon Ra to the approved method of "aging" small forgeries by feeding them to a turkey (and then presumably watching very carefully until the object is eliminated from the bird). They're short articles, and some of the individual subjects have had entire books written about them, but these provide an interesting survey of the field.

THE VERSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD, by Frank Rowsome, Jr. (Dutton, \$1.65) Expensive, for a 120-page paperback, but the Burma Shave signs are part of my nostalgia, so I bought it. It's a capsule history of Burma Shave's roadside advertising, plus an appendix listing every sign ever used. The text includes a few that weren't used due to their questionable taste ("Listen, birds / these signs cost / money / so roost awhile / but don't get funny". Propriety was much stronger in the 1940s....) I suppose the signs that were used seem a little tame to the modern generation, but they seemed funny at the time. And the idea of humorous advertising of any kind was totally new back then - it's not too frequent, yet. (Mostly because of the signs, I was a regular Burma Shave user until the company switched from jars to aerosol cans and almost immediately went off the market, at least in my area.)

EDWARD VIII, by Frances Donaldson (Ballantine, \$2.25) A big 600-page book, which is almost more than I care to know about Edward. But it's a well-written, detailed biography of one of the more unusual British monarchs. Recommended to biography/history fans.

NIGHTGLEAMS, by "Julia Thatcher" (Ballantine, \$1.25) A fairly straight historical gothic about a country girl who grows up to become an astrologer in New York at the turn of the century. Nice background material, if a bit hammed up on spots.

THE MASTER AND THE MAIDEN, by Alice Chetwynd Ley (Ballantine, \$1.25) Historical romance; heroine becomes enamored of a mill-owner during the Luddite riots. But there's not much history, and the romance isn't all that great. (And the bias against the mill-workers, while quite historically correct, will put off any good left-wing reader in the audience. Femfans take note....)

NAZCA: JOURNEY TO THE SUN, by Jim Woodman (Pocket Books, \$1.75) Give this one points for an accurate blurb: "What Kon-Tiki uncovered about man's mastery of the sea, Nazca now reveals about man's conquest of the air." The catch, of course, being that Kon-Tiki didn't "uncover" anything. Inspired by Heyerdahl, this group made a hot-air balloon from materials which they say are the equivalent of fabrics found in Peruvian graves, and flew it. (This, they feel, proves beyond a doubt that any New World legends about people flying were originated by hot-air balloonists operating from their Nazca airfield. Yes.) I'm sure it was fun to do; any scientific benefits are more dubious. (But at least, they encourage the preservation of the Nazca figures and provide an address for anyone wanting information; International Explorers, 3132 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Coral Gables, Miami, FL 33134. Someone with more time than I have might write and see what sort of response he/she gets.)

THE CURSE OF THE PHAROAHs, by Philipp Vandenberg (Pocket Books, \$1.75) The Curse of King Tut's Tomb again. Proving that no occult hoax can be killed so thoroughly that it won't bob up again in the next generation. (It's been updated; now the "curse" is caused by "deadly radiation". And the tablet bearing the curse is "considered lost" - most experts consider it imaginary, in reality.)

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION, by David Kyle (Hamlyn, £3.95) Selling for \$7.95 from U.S. dealers. A nice assortment of illustrations - not up to the Gunn book, but then neither is the price; even the pb edition of Gunn costs more. Reproduction is very good; far superior to Aldiss or Frewin. (Where the publisher saved money was in the binding; I've had to reinforce both front and back endsheets since I bought the volume.) The text is basic; a trifle more British-oriented than the US-published histories but covering the ground adequately. It didn't tell me anything I didn't know already, even the British material - but then, I had a fascination for British sf mags and picked up a good assortment of them, years ago. Kyle also covers more ground than a lot of his rivals; there are photos of comic books, Big Little Books, fanzines, bookplates, paperbacks, movie posters; the lot, from Lucian of Samosata to Perry Rhodan and J. G. Ballard. In only 170 pages, 9 x 13, with most of them devoted to illustration, there's no room for depth, but the coverage is broad enough. Mainly, though, you buy this one for the pretty pictures. They're worth the price.

THE DEVIL IN IRON, by Robert E. Howard (Donald M. Grant, Publisher, West Kingston, RI 02892 - \$15.00) Sixth in Grant's matched set of Conan books. This includes two novelets, "Shadows In Zamboula" and the title story. Six tipped-in color prints are by Dan Green, who has an unusual style; interesting but totally unlike the usual sword-and-sorcery illustrators. "Shadows" is one of the better Conan tales, with an interesting twist at the end. "Devil" is fairly standard monster-in-the-ruined-city stuff, competently done but nothing outstanding. The bookbinding is superb, and of course what sells the book; collectors want the full set. But "Shadows", at least, is worthy of the fancy binding.

CRISIS ON CONSHSELF TEN, by Monica Hughes (Atheneum, \$5.95) Juvenile, for the 10 to 12 year old set, I'd guess. (There is boy-girl romance of a sort, but much too chastely handled for today's teenager.) Plot is the usual one of differences between the residents of undersea cities and the mainlanders; the major gimmick is that all the good guys are loudly anti-violence, and the hero finds an anti-violent solution to the problem. (Also a highly improbable one.) Not outstandingly good writing, but acceptable. Recommended to parents who are serious about raising their offspring to respect the ecology and shun violence; plot and characters are a bit bland for the average reader.

CRACKPOT, by Ron Goulart (Doubleday, \$5.95) Interesting that the author is blurbed as "The Mack Sennet of Science Fiction" on a book that isn't particularly funny. Goulart pretty much takes his background of malfunctioning robots for granted here and writes a fairly normal adventure story about a newsman who is, without his consent or knowledge, turned into a walking bomb. It's not exactly a serious book, but it's not as funny as the usual Goulart novel, either. (It's also very short - can't be over 40,000 words and looks like less. Which as far as I'm concerned is all to the good; I have too many enormously long books for review now.) Reasonably good, but not top quality Goulart.

STAR WARS, by George Lucas (Ballantine, \$1.50) An adjunct to a movie script, apparently. The movie would seem to be an unserious version of PLANET STORIES; pure and improbable space opera. (At least, I hope it's unseriously intended, because that's the way it comes out.) Galactic rebellion, obliterated planets, and a big, gaudy, and overlong dogfight in space at the end. As a movie, it might be fun; as a book, it's sort of nostalgic. Recommended to fans with my type of bad taste.

THE STARCROSSED, by Ben Bova (Pyramid, \$1.50) I reviewed the hardcover awhile back. A funny look at making a tv space-opera series, which didn't exactly turn me on. Maybe it's because the original was one of Harlan's space-opera series, or maybe Bova's humor doesn't mesh with mine. Try it and see what you think.

IN SEARCH OF THE MAYA, by Robert L. Brunhouse (Ballantine, \$1.95) A look at the pioneers or Central American archaeology; del Rio, Dupaix, Galindo, Waldeck, Stephens and Catherwood, Brasseur, Le Plongeon, and Thompson. It's blurbed as an exploration of occult mysteries, but ignore that; it's a well-written factual account of a group of well-meaning if occasionally weird-thinking amateur architects. Their occasionally odd beliefs are noted, along with their contributions - if any - to science. Recommended.

CARNOBLINGS

Bob Tucker, 34 Greenbriar Drive, Jacksonville, IL 62650

That was a fine back cover by John Ford, a magnificent work! I recommend that you raise his rate of payment for any future artwork he may send you. (Do artists get paid by the ~~brush~~-stroke or the pen-stroke, as the equivalent of the word rate?) Well, up his rate to two cents per pen-stroke. The cover carried me back to that dark and noisy night on the Muleback's poopdeck.

Shed a tear for Phyllis Eisenstein, struggling to find and then identify hapless pros in that darkened mob. I can almost picture her lighting matches in the face of every hulking figure that loomed over her, asking desperately "Are you a pro? Do I know you? Have you ever sold a story to Amazing?" By the time the hulking figure can manage to say yes, the match goes out and she makes a wild stab at his bod with a bit of ribbon and a pin.

Now I know why so many pros stumbled toward the microphone with ribbons pinned in the donkey position. (Several of them were never able to find the microphone. There are rumors that some strange people were found wandering about the poopdeck, confused and lost, when the hotel people closed down the pool in October.)

[I assumed that those with the ribbon in the donkey position were the ones who'd sold to Amazing..... RSC]

Linda Sannita, 6244 Eastridge Drive 103, Indianapolis, IN 46219

I empathise with your 60-degree situation. On the days we've been in session, we're set at that temperature, too. I find it somewhat difficult to instruct while trailing my heating blanket cord. The main problem, though, in determining which students simply don't know, from those who are in the first stages of rigor.

[For you lucky creatures in California and other hot climes, I might mention that the 60° was the indoor temperature, at work, for the worst of our cold weather. (At home, it didn't always get up that high.) RSC]

Chris Walker, 447 W. Belmont #30, Chicago, IL 60657

I wonder if the differences I note between the secondhand book stores Denny Lien writes about and the ones I know are regional? Like the places he describes, in local used-book stores I see lots of old copies of None Dare Call It Treason (and just as many of Masters of Deceit, I might add) - it's a wonder they printed so many - and I see lots of Louis L'Amour westerns, just as he says. But I note very little used

porn, which makes me wonder what kind of stores Denny frequents. Unless he means old pb fiction with half-clad ladies on the covers.

I always assumed those were as basically tame as old sf pulps with brass-bra'd astronautics in the arms or tentacles of BEMs. Weren't they innocent? Have I overlooked a stockpile of lascivious material? Also I don't ever remember seeing old crossword-puzzle books in secondhand stores, filled or unfilled. Maybe because they wouldn't have interested me.

There are a bunch of always-present old unwanted items that I do notice in used book stores, though, and even more commonly in bazaars,



church sales and such. Reader's Digest Condensed Books, of course, and tattered gems from the best-seller lists of years gone by. I wish I had a good book in my library for every copy I've passed up of CAPTAINS FROM CASTILE, or ANTHONY ADVERSE, or FOREVER AMBER, or Sabatini's CAPTAIN BLOOD (I rarely see SCARAMOUCHE by the same author). THE ROBE, GIRL OF THE LIMBERLOST and Gene Stratton-Porter's other, even less-celebrated books. Tarkington's novels, Norah Loft's

books, Mika Waltari's cheap historical romances. THE SARACEN BLADE; I forget who that's by, though I read it years ago on the never-again-consulted advice of my grandfather. It seems impossible that so many people read those books, let alone that so many bought them, only to discard.

Denny's further item on laundry room disappearances reminds me of an incident in my last apartment building; I went downstairs to the laundry room with a load of wash and found a peeved and plaintive note from one of my neighbors, asking whomever ~~had~~ stolen her nurse's uniform out of the dryer to return it as she only owned two and would need it. Can you imagine? A nurse's uniform? Presumably somebody had taken it just to be taking something. People are strange, and sometimes not very nice.

[Another argument for country living; city people may not be nastier than their rural counterparts, but there are more of them. I think SARACEN BLADE was by Frank Yerby, one of the poorest historical novelists who ever existed. But he wrote the sort of books the masses enjoyed reading. You won't find lots of unwanted Gene Stratton-Porter books in this area; if there are any in used book stores, they're probably priced high. She began her career only about 30 miles from here and is a regional celebrity. RSC]

Bill Heron, 3600 Keith St., Apt. 602, Cleveland, TN 37311

The above address is new. I used to be in Apt. 305 but got burned out. An idiot maintenance man was welding a valve on the water line between the walls and caught the insulation on fire. He must have been anti-sf because he sure destroyed a lot of it.

My collection got fried, sprinkled, frozen, chipped apart, left outside in garbage bags for three weeks and managed to find the time and energy to grow a rather interesting fungus. The fungus seemed to like Burroughs, Perry Rhodan, and Star Trek but couldn't stomach the Shadow. Too much raw carbon, I guess. The firemen couldn't tolerate the New Wave of a few years ago; they thoroughly soaked Aldiss, Malzberg, Vonnegut and Delany. I recognize that some of those authors probably didn't consider themselves New Wave but I reserve the right to have my own opinion even if I'm wrong. Especially if I'm wrong.

The fire itself seemed to prefer pulp magazines and Galaxy with a slight sprinkling of Avon Fantasy Readers. Did you know that back issues of YANDRO can be destroyed by the effects of fire and flood? I thought they were made of sturdier material. Shame on you.

Do you happen to know of any publication beside Resnick's "Official Guide To The Fantastics" which has the values of paperbacks? I lost approximately 4700 fantasy and sf paperbacks and need a source besides myself to estimate their worth. Resnick's prices for paperbacks looked about 4 years old to me.

[I didn't know of anything; if any readers do, please drop a card to Bill.

Asbestos paper is a bit expensive for us, but if you had kept your back issue YANDROs in your privy like Tucker does, you'd have had some use



out of them. RSC]

George Oshry, 522 Cottonwood Str., Grand Forks, ND 58201

I got the latest YANDRO and found Lien's column as funny as ever. I also was amazed at the letter from Anna Schoppenhorst; good god, things haven't changed at all since I was in high school. You might warn her that for misfits (such as I was and you too, I suspect) life remains interesting enough as they get older but the boobs of the world run the show all through. It's one of the few truths I've learned from philosophy: The world is so filled with schmucks because it is designed for their survival and they make the rules. I try to ignore them as much as ever but then it may lead to a satisfaction of sorts but never to what it known as a "sucessful" life. Well, I hope she continues to fight the good fight.

Last week I made a serious mistake. I decided to find out if what White had complained of Norman's Gor series was true as it had been years since I had read anything of it. So, I happened to see a couple of the books at the second hand shop and picked them up. I wouldn't go so far as to say that they were pornographic, as White says, but particularly dreadful, that I would say, and that would be too much praise. I also read the "Dream Lords" series by Adrian Cole: rotten! Pass it up if you get the chance.

I suppose that you may be watching ROOTS on tv. I've found it to be mostly maudlin and chockful of bad facts put in by TV script writers to move the action along or to present abolitionist stereotypes. The worst was last night with the most awful of time compressions. In the dialogue we are told that the war with England is over and then the very next day or so we are told that Washington has been elected president. Unfortunately Washington wasn't elected president until seven years after the war was over, which would have placed the time sequence way out of kilter. I thought the National Geographic Special shown on PBS last year on slavery was far and away the most superior.

[We didn't get any PBS special on slavery; our little PBS station at Ball State is better than nothing but not exactly the greatest in the world. I didn't watch "ROOTS" closely enough to catch discrepancies, since it wasn't telling me anything I didn't already know (but it sure told some of my co-workers things they didn't know and weren't sure they believed); I just followed the general line unless there was a particularly interesting character on stage. But overall it was a lot like "Star Trek"; with all the flaws, it was a lot better than anything else that tv had ever done with that subject. I pretty much enjoyed it. RSC]

Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Road, Hoddesdon, Herts., Great Britain

Colder than Iceland over Xmas and 20 degrees below zero many days. Many areas have been covered by snow with school children forced to sleep in the schools when they were cut off but we have been very lucky around here, it snowed only two days and returned to rain later and washed it all away. I've had a running nose and a hacking cough all over Xmas and the cough still comes and goes. I think it is a legacy of hanging around bus stops waiting for buses which seldom come. It took me four hours Saturday travelling 22 miles into London. I waited 45 minutes at one stop, another half an hour, another bus passed full up - it was hopeless. I'm paying 32 pence just to travel six miles to work after the latest increase. Most of the secondhand cars I can afford are too small to get in, too expensive to run, too costly to insure, or in too poor condition.

[Just to let US fans know they aren't alone. We only had about 6 inches of snow in our blizzard but it tied up half of Indiana because it all blew into drifts - mostly across highways. (I can hardly imagine Buffalo, with over 13 feet of snow this winter; the drifts theremust have buried 3-story houses. RSC]

Alexander Yudenitsch, Caixa Postal 9613, 01000 Sao Paulo, SP, Brazil

The problem Brazil's been having with its balance of payments, expecially as regards petrol, has spawned the Government's latest brainchild: gas use "rationalizing" (instead of rationing, which has been a strong candidate waiting in the wings),

which consists of several measures, including an 18¢ "surtax" (refundable in 2 years' time, without any interest or monetary correction - with a 46 percent per year inflation, you can guess what that means...) on each liter of gas, which means gas will be costing the equivalent of US\$2.38 per gallon (Brazil 6,80/liter), for all practical purposes; and how does that strike you? Also, the entrance of private cars in the central zones of cities will be variously discouraged and/or forbidden, government agencies will have to use rail or water transportation to ship freight (instead of trucks, which comprise about 80 percent of our transportation force), gas station will be closed from Saturday night until Monday morning near the cities, and so on.

[While we're showing US fans how well off they are... Though I wouldn't be surprised to see similar measures in force here, in a few years. RSC]

Jan Rigby, 5817 N. Paulina, Chicago, IL 60660

In reply to Mr. Lien's speculations upon the other-worldly sojourns of socks lost in the laundry: After many years of observing this phenomenon, we have come to a conclusion that may startle many of you. It is not that socks are sentient, nor are they spirited away from within enclosed washing machines by aliens subtle of thought and skilled in sleight-of-hand, nor are bugged socks monitoring our defense plants. The answer is far more insidious than this.

The washing machines are sentient!

The washing machines - faithful servants of everyday life? No, a menace masquerading as that humble household device. The missing socks? Hostages, pawns in this vile conspiracy - a trial run of striking at the human race through our most vulnerable point - bare feet. What human, clad to the teeth in thermal underwear, a turtle-neck, and bib overalls, would venture out into a wintry morning without any socks?

Humans! Throw off the bondage that ties you to these alien interlopers! Wash your socks by hand (then wash your hands). Return to the simple ways of our forefathers and foremothers and keep your socks on your feet at all times! Unplug your washing machines before you go to bed, and beware the machine that begins to spew soapy water when disconnected!

The call to arms could come at almost any time. Parents! Do you know where your children's socks are tonight?

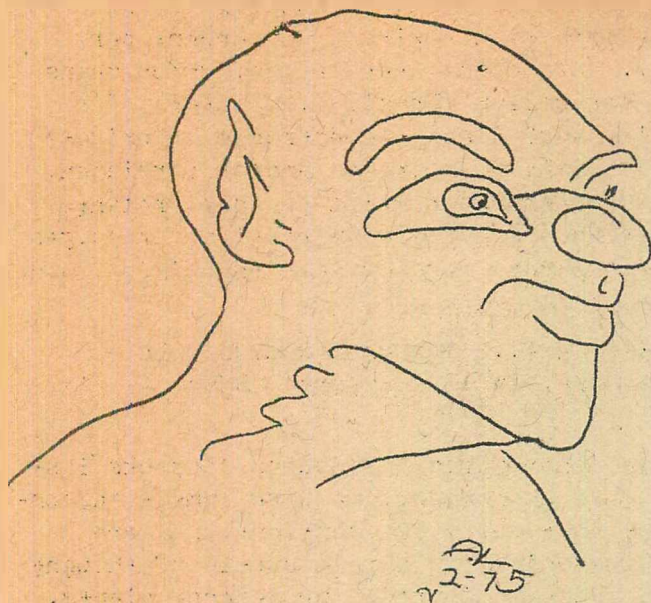
Sandra Miesel, 8744 N. Pennsylvania St., Indianapolis, IN 46240

I was finished with the heavy research for Gordy's article until the two books I ordered on interlibrary loan arrived. 850 pages - in French. I think I'll try to concentrate on the relevant parts. However there have been some interesting not to say bizarre sidepaths in the material covered so far. For instance the mythological and ritual implications of bare feet. (I am not making this up!) It seems bare feet were one of the art symbols of the Norse god Njord because his wife chose him out of a group of disguised gods by the beauty of his feet. Walking barefoot on cropland is supposed to bring fertility in various peasant rituals practiced into recent times in Russia. The Romans held a festival called the Nudipedalia in times of drought that featured participants in bare feet. The question is, does Ken Moore realize how vital he is to the Tennessee economy?

[Maybe that's the solution to Lien's comments about missing socks, too. The washing machines are tools of the gods, trying to restore us to grace by keeping us barefooted. They weren't Norgo washers, were they, Denny? RSC]

Robert Adams

Last summer, the owner-operator of a small business venture, located in the Fan District of Richmond, Virginia, was beaten to the floor by two young, black punks, who then robbed his register and looted his shop. Recovering somewhat just as they swaggered out, he pulled a single-action Colt revolver from beneath a stack of paper sacks and followed his attackers. He got out just in time to see them pile into an automobile and screech away. He fired a single round which penetrated the rear window and apparently was deflected down, as it later was found lodged in an accessory unit under the dashboard. The car had been stolen and was found abandoned later that



day. The two thugs were never apprehended. The merchant was tried, convicted, and has been sentenced to serve five years in the State Prison Facility for "discharging a firearm into an occupied vehicle"!

So, Gary Anderson considers Norfolk and Virginia to be the "armpit of the nation," does he? Well, I consider southern California to be the very rectum of the continent if Gary Anderson constitutes a fair example of that region's output!

Allen Harrell, P.O. Box 1135, Black Mountain, NC 28711

Even tho we've had our share of snow I'm glad to be out of smogsville where I lived for so long. I mean after coming from Phoenix where I'd gotten used to clean air and sunshine I was a little hard put to get readjusted to the pallid skies and rancid water of Norfolk. There's even the

legend that Norfolk will never sink because it's floating on its own pollution. Did you get the news on the wire service where Hampton Roads Sanitation Dept. received a court order to desist from dumping its purified waste in the Norfolk reservoir because some of the purified waste was clogging the filters of the water plant? The newspapers seem to gloat on being able to publish that the bacterial level of the tidewater public water supply was the highest of any in the country and the Kepone level was barely under tolerable level... Then the Kepone scandal broke and they found they had misread the Kepone level... And you have undoubtedly heard of "Norfolk Lung"; this is in your standard Medical Journal of diseases and it comes from simply breathing the air there. They even tried to prove the water from the sanitation plant was pure enough to drink when it was dumped into the reservoir and the judge proved his point when he asked the director of the place if he'd drink a glass and the director avowed that the reference was only to the bacterial count and it was further purified as it went through the water works. The judge then wanted to know how such purified waste water could clog the filters and the director was sure they must be referring to material already in the reservoir which did a lot for everyone's confidence as well. Good old Norfolk, I'm glad I'm gone.

[Sentiment seems to be running two to one against Norfolk so far. As yet, nobody has said anything about the rest of Virginia, though. RSC]

Joe Christopher

YANDRO 238 came the other day, and I see no one took you up on that incredible statement you made in (I think) 237. Re copyrighting, you said you didn't mind sticking the notice on anything anybody wanted copyrighted. But according to my copy of General Information on Copyright (The Library of Congress, 1969), after publication two copies must be deposited with a \$6 fee. (I hear the fee is going up to \$10 next year.) Who is paying the fee for copyrighting material in YANDRO?

[You read our statement that we'd put the copyright notice on the material; you didn't read anything to the effect that we'd pay the fee, too. (We will furnish the extra copies...) De Camp is the major individual doing copyrighting of YANDRO material, and he handles his own. RSC]

Joseph T. Major, 314 Jessie Ave, Hopkinsville, KY 42240

Something funny is happening, or was happening, with the NRA. Back in October, Ron Paul of Texas introduced a resolution to overturn the District of Columbia's gun control ordinance. Then the NRA came out against it, because they wanted to try it out in the courts. Considering the courts, this doesn't seem very bright.

I have been reading over some old YANDROs recently, and in your review of Breakheart Pass you mentioned howsilly it was to put a safety catch on a Colt .45. What

bothers me is all these spy heroes and heroines who carry .25 automatics. Someday one of them is going to run into someone who knows guns - no, they won't, because then the series would be over.

The John Ford bacover was just right. I remember walking around looking at people's nametags. What with night-blindness and muscle strain, I wonder how I survived.

I'm surprised that you haven't reviewed The Magic of Uri Geller. The author made an interesting offer: \$10,000 to any psychic who can perform a psychic act that he can't duplicate. Couple of problems - they have to let him watch them doing it, and they have to say what they're going to do 10 days in advance.

[The publisher didn't offer the book for review, and I'm not enough interested in Geller to read a whole book about him. Christopher's chapter disposed of him nicely, in about the right length. RSC]

Paul Anderson, 21 Mulga Road, Hawthorndene, SA 5051, Australia

The clipping from the Thompsons in Y235 concerning the elderly storekeeper reminded me of the bit in the news recently. Some years ago 3 policemen gave a "swimming lesson" to a homosexual university professor and he did not survive the experience. The matter caused quite an uproar and the government flew out a team of English police to investigate the crime. The police were exonerated as far as criminal proceedings were concerned but they soon resigned from the force. The report was never released for public scrutiny. Now some years later we read in the paper that the officer in charge of the investigation has just been sentenced to 10 years jail (as far as I recall) for running a pornography distribution racket. For \$1,600 they sold you a license/protection to sell obscene material in adult bookstores. If you did not pay up your place was raided and the stocks confiscated for court proceedings. Later the material found its way at cut rate prices to the shops that had paid up when asked.

I liked Brunner's Shockwave Rider when I eventually read it, some time after my Ballantine edition got here. It was better than most of his rewrite jobs but by no means up to his best work. I know I placed it highly on the Hugo ballot listings.

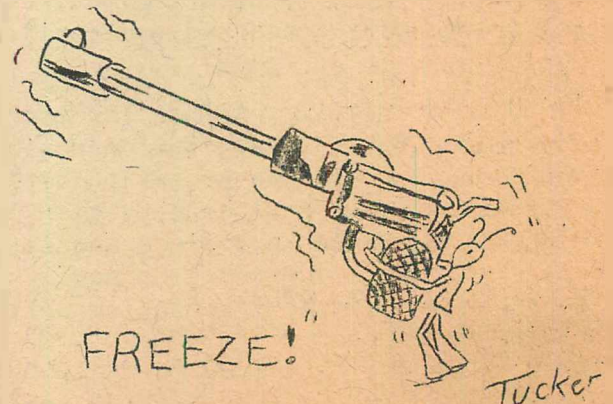
Probably I would have enjoyed the Brunner more if I had not tried to read it after finishing the Doris Lessing novel, The Fourgated City, which said much the same sort of thing and a lot more besides in the 650 odd pages that she requires. However she only needed a few pages to get the message of the "plug in society" across to the reader. The book even qualified as science fiction, even if it was done by a writer from outside the genre and written a lot better than 90 percent of the stuff that you get to review.

Since you liked Rax for last year's Hugo ballot I would suggest that you look up Coney's new book for Gollancz, Brontomek. That one has a '76 copyright and should be eligible this year. The book is a sequel of sorts to both Mirror Image and Syzygy.

[A couple of people now have mentioned Doris Lessing. I never seem to see her books on the stands - largely, I gather, because they're in the mystery section and I seldom think to look at that section at all. Some day... RSC]

Eric Lindsay, 6 Hillcrest Ave., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia

I picked up a US Army pamphlet last time and it made their life sound like something astoundingly interesting - don't you have "truth in advertising" laws there? On gun control, there is no state here in which handguns are available, except to people with a police permit, but the other day police shot someone (a bank robber) in a raid and he had two magnum revolvers, as



well as a shotgun. So much for gun control.

Robert E. Briney, 4 Forest Ave., Salem, MA 01970

THE LAST CELT did not affect my occasional enjoyment of Howard's fiction (a remnant of the much more intense enthusiasm of twenty years ago or so), but it did manage to tell me more than I cared to know about REH as a person - opinionated and immature, the kind of person I would detest if I met him in person. The bibliography, however, is an impressive job, and makes the whole book worthwhile for a bibliography-phile like me.

Pinnacle Books is reissuing some of the Harold Lamb biographies that were available as Bantam paperbacks a few years ago. I picked up CYRUS THE GREAT, since my previous copy mysteriously disappeared during one of the packings-and-unpackings involved in moving. In the Pinnacle edition, a notice on the reverse of the title page says: "This is a work of fiction. All the characters and events portrayed in this book are fictional, and any resemblance to real people and incidents is purely coincidental." What a way to undercut their own cover blurbs about the virtues of this biographical narrative.

One of my contributions to THE MYSTERY STORY is a long chapter called "Death Rays, Demons, and Worms Unknown To Science" (I thought up the title first, then had to write something to match it), on fantasy and sf elements in mystery fiction. I managed to get in a lengthy plug for Florence Stevenson's books, and even mentioned NOW YOU SEE IT/HIM/THEM...

[Favorably? Not that it matters too much now the book has been remaindered.

Pinnacle must put that disclaimer in all their books, automatically. I recall reading it in some World War II history book they published (sure, Hitler was a fictional character.) Maybe someone should explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction to their editors? RSC]

Giovanni Scognamillo, Postacilar Sokak 13/13, Beyoglu, Istanbul, Turkey

Since our pay scales are rather low I've taken on a lot of work and practically I'm booked, or so it seems, until the end of 1977. I still have to finish translating Spengler's THE FALL OF THE WEST, Volume I, then I have to translate from Turkish to Italian a play. A project I had submitted one year ago to our Art Academy's Film and TV Institute has finally obtained an ok and I have already signed an agreement with some very close delivery dates. It's a HISTORY OF THE TURKISH CINEMA, in two volumes, to be delivered respectively on March and June 1977. Then I'll have to go on with volume 2 of Spengler to be followed by another translation, Erich Fromm's BEYOND THE CHAINS OF ILLUSION, MY ENCOUNTERS WITH MARX AND FREUD. And it's not enough. In the meantime I'll have to deal with other translations (film scripts, film dialogues), some articles here and there, plus my job at the Board of Censors. I already feel tired! Translations are an interesting job, a sort of hard fight between you and someone other, that someone who wrote the book you're translating. Like a corrida. With a 250 or 300 pages long bull!

[All authors seem to have the choice between being overworked and underpaid, and being underworked and underpaid.... RSC]

Mae Strelkov, C.C. 55, 5220 - Jesus Maria, Cordoba, Argentina

I've been struggling against the order to put 5220 before "Jesus Maria" when it looks better after. But now the Ascochinga (nearer-us) Post Office gave Vadim an elegant book with all the postal codes for all Argentina, and there are so many Jesus Marias dotting this country that it's no wonder not all my mail reaches me. (What's amazing is so many zines and letters do continually arrive, you nice people, you-all, keeping me cheered.) So now if I could put 5220 in huger script still, I'd do it. There are a most interesting collection of repetitions of names for towns, bespeaking our history.

The most revealing sector is under "S"; San and Santa type towns absolutely pululate. So you have 12 San Agustins, for instance. Only 8 Saint Albertos. SEVENTY-THREE St. Antonys of different sorts, mostly the original one without the added "of Something or Other". Saints Benito and Bernardo have acquired quite a lot of little

towns, also, but counting exact numbers is proving wearisome. And oh, how many San Carloses there are! Dozens...St. Paul hasn't succeeded in getting towns named after him to the extent St. Peter did. Some 12 for Paul, but 63 for Peter, plus some Peters subsequent to the Fisherman at-the-start, but an impressive list and it goes to show we needed zone-numbers, DESPERATELY.

Heavens, you still buy guns freely? We can't keep them without all sorts of fancy new permits.

[Yes, and there was an article in the Fort Wayne paper awhile back, by a professor who taught for awhile in Buenos Aires, under some sort of exchange agreement, about the shootings in the streets (he said the first thing he did every morning was check to see if there was a body in the courtyard of his apartment building. Sure gun permits will stop violence, and all the civilized countries like Argentina have tighter gun controls than the barbaric US. (This is not aimed at Mae, but at my super-liberal readers.))//Never say YANDRO isn't educational; I thought you people out there needed a lesson in geography. I believe the US post office is holding to its rule of only one post office per state with the same name. There are 3 Silver Lakes and 2 Diskos in Indiana, but only one of each has a post office. (Though of course there may be one Silver Lake in every one of the 50 states...and there may well be.) RSC]

Rick Brooks, RR 1, Box 268, Fremont, IN 46737

Did you see about the Ft. Wayne motorist who tried to drive through a puddle caused by a broken water line? They said it froze his tires down before he could get thru.

I've opened NONE DARE CALL IT TREASON. Wasn't too long before I closed it, too. The socks problem is much simpler. To sell more socks, one of each pair is made so as to dissolve in the wash.

My brother Jim tells me that the story of the Arabs wanting to buy the Alamo was a fabrication by the SAN ANTONIO NEWS, one of the Aussie pubber Murdoch's chain. The same guy that brought out the NEW YORKER and a couple of others in NYC and stirred up a fuss.

Piers Anthony could have kept Laser from pubbing BUT WHAT OF EARTH? by refusing Laser's money.

[No, he couldn't. He could have returned the money, perhaps, but he had been paid in full before the Laser higherups took a good look at his manuscript. (And his contention is that Elwood never told him that a major rewrite would be necessary. Elwood disagrees, and of course I have no idea what was said between those two. But Elwood knew that a major rewrite would be necessary, certainly.) Since Laser never sent Piers the galleys (no explanation of that) the book was in print before he knew what had been done to it. I had assumed that Piers would get the galleys and would explode then. //I read that story about the motorist's tires freezing to the pavement while he was driving thru the water - I'm not positive that I believe it, but it was in the paper and on the local news. RSC]

Gene DeWeese, 2718 N. Prospect, Milwaukee, WI 53211

Already disposed of almost fifty NYSIHT's. Not making much money, but at least I'm not losing any. The Milwaukee library took 19, Gini bought 10, some kids in the UW-M class that's using JEREMY CASE is taking a few. And a nearby comics/fanzine/nostalgia store has sold four so far and took six more. Have to tell Doubleday, the way to sell a book is to put them at a competitive price. None of this \$5.95 nonsense.

Ira M. Thornhill, 1900 Perdido St., Apt. B97, New Orleans, LA 70112

I agree with Juanita about the collection of antiques (and fake antiques). It's a booming business all around the New Orleans area and I know several people who've "decorated" their homes with items that they wouldn't consider using even if they knew how. It's all beyond me.

As for "Rumblings", I'll have to admit that only one or three of my co-workers know about my involvement in fandom and only one of them has made any effort to understand (glance thru a zine or two, etc.) I don't even try to explain any more - when somebody asks a question (more rare since I started working nights and only see four or five people in the course of an entire shift) I begin an answer/discussion - but they are usually rapidly bored and learn not to ask. Fortunately, like Bob I'm able to hold up my end of a conversation on any of the more popular subjects of discussion (sex, sports, sex, drugs, sex, money&taxes, sex, perverted-sex, sex, etc.) so that there are only one or two people here who still like to run around telling me how weird I am.

[Actually, my atheism bothers more people than my interest in stf. I touched off another furor just yesterday, all because I mentioned that I didn't hold Jimmy Carter's Christianity against him.... (Yes, I work at being irritating in my non-fan contacts, too...) But there are advantages in being the office humorist; nobody stays mad long. RSC]

Steve Simmons, 2241 Miller, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

This has to be one of the hardest to LoC YANDROs that I've ever seen. Not because there were no comment hooks in the letters or books that I wanted to mention or articles/columns that I wanted to discuss - No, I'm afraid there was a much more serious reason. I couldn't find the damn thing.

I'd put it down to answer the door or cook dinner or something and when I'd come back I'd look around the room and think "There's DYNATRON" or "There's KAR-ASS" or something similar, but I just couldn't see the YANDRO. Green, indeed.

Of course the Faan Awards are to make you feel important. The damn things are more expressive of what I think is the best around, so I vote for them. However, I can be damn sure that on my part I'm doing it because I want to see the people I really think deserve it wind up with something a little bit more than just a friendly LoC. I can't speak for anyone else's motivation, but I at least hope that they feel the way I do. As for fan Hugos, I think that if I ever happened to be at a business meeting and the subject came up, I'd vote against them. Mainly because I don't see why the same award should be given to a fanzine editor that goes to the best novelist.

On the contrary, Buck, I know several women who will testify that a lot of fun can be had with a Hugo. (No, I'm not making that up - and I doubt that they'll let me give out their names.)

The swifties were so bad that they were good. They got read aloud here to a chorus of crazed groans.

Hmm/ I had been avoiding THE MAKING OF KING KONG like the plague, but after your review I think that I'll go after it. [Publicity depts. take note. RSC]

Have you read THE KILLING GIFT by Bari Wood? I was put off by the blurbs on it, as it sounded like something that had been done a zillion times before (young girl discovers in a crisis that she is telekinetic, ho hum) but it turned out to be done with a new twist, excellent characters and smoothly put together. Recommended. They're making a movie of it, which should be excellent.

Is Sandra Ley any relation to Willy Ley? The name isn't all that common.

Just today I was reading an article about the machine that will read books aloud to the blind, and it sits well with the comments you were making about the parents putting kids on their laps and reading to them. My parents never did that, but I was reading before I was in school, so my memory really wouldn't cover it. But with this machine do you think that there might be an upsurge in kids interested in books? Or possibly the other way around - now nobody has to learn to read.

CDDoyle and Anna Schoppenhorst sound like good people. I always empathise with someone trying to get through high school alive. My first 3 years in HS were hell, as was all of jr high school. I wish to hell I could give advice as to how to improve things, but nothing I ever tried really worked. One suggestion that helped somewhat - try not to deliberately antagonize the people who dislike you. Eventually they will leave you alone, which is preferable to getting picked on.

I found that college was a little easier to take, but nowhere near what I had been led to think that it was going to be. There will still be asshole teachers, asskissing students, and jocks in the dorms. But the percentage of reasonable people is a little higher, and with a larger number overall to pick from, the odds on finding really nice ones are a lot higher.

Roy Tackett takes a cheap shot at kids being dressed alike in schools today. It may seem to the casual observer that there is no difference between the kids voluntarily wearing the same styles and being forced into uniforms, but in the minds and attitudes of the kids there is a hell of a difference.

[Sandra Ley is Willy's daughter.//I'm not sure I want to know the names of women who can have fun with a Hugo...I'm not in that class. They probably look speculatively at King Kong.//After due thought, I decided that the book-reading machine won't have much effect on anything but blind people. If the parents want to plunk the kid down with a machine, they already have tv. And if the kid wants to be read to, it's not just because of the reading; it's the closeness with one or more parents. (Besides, the machine can't stop and answer questions like "What's a doubloon, Daddy?" Or "What's a Black Spot, Daddy?" Or, in Bruce's case, "What's an entmoot, Mommy?") I was read to both before I knew how to read, and after I was forbidden to read non-schoolwork - because of bad eyes - in the 2nd. and 3rd. grade. (I could have used the reading machine during the second period - but we couldn't have afforded one.) RSC]

George Fergus, 1810 Hemlock Place, Apt. 204, Schaumburg, IL 60195

To commence on a high plane: one of the more elegant explanations of "Why Johnny Can't Read" nowadays (apparently no one cares whether or not Janie can read) relates to the growth in family size since World War II. A number of different studies have shown an inverse relationship between family size and IQ. The theory is that IQ develops in rough accordance with the average intellectual level of the family into which a child is born. If it already consists of several young children, this impoverishes the intellectual environment, resulting in dumber and dumber children. The originator of the theory predicts that the high school SAT scores will begin rising again by 1980 because of the decreasing birth rate that started in the sixties.

You stated that trying to purge sexist connotations from the language is a worthless endeavor because language is merely a reflection of culture. I must second Denny Lien's objection to this. Culture is transmitted to each new generation not only by the overt content of language, but also by its covert structure. The medium is part of the message. (Re-read Delany's Babel-17 for a good SF treatment of this.)

Now, I do disagree with Denny and other feminists on what constitutes sexism in language. I see nothing wrong with "madam chairman" and am not about to plunk Horatio Hornblower down into a "person-o'-war". I think that compound words quickly lose whatever connotations their component parts may have had. "Eaves-dropping" does not conjure up a picture of someone standing under the eaves.

However, the absence of a non-sexist personal pronoun does contribute to the maintenance of sexist attitudes by forcing us, for example, to associate a gender with every occupation: "the doctor, he", "the nurse, she". And the historical account of "men did this" and "Man invented that" does affect children's perceptions of the world, because it is impossible to remove the male connotations. Women cannot raise their consciousness simply by getting equal rights under the law and exhorting each other with the female equivalent of "black is beautiful".

[Then why do women have a higher position in this country and in England than in those countries which do have non-sexist personal pronouns in their languages? Culture is transmitted by the interpretation of language; introducing euphemisms will not change the interpretation of those euphemisms. (As someone said, we used to say "men" and "women"; now we say "men" and "persons" - but the emotional associations remain the same. And will remain the same, no matter what euphemisms are used, until the culture changes....by which time the words won't need to be changed. RSC]

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE MAILBOX

I finally found a clipping that I may have mentioned earlier; it was the Hanover, Indiana, school board which ordered the AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY removed from the shelves because it contained dirty words. This was by a 4-1 vote. Later, by a 3-2 vote, they allowed senior English students to have access to the book, unless specific requests were received from parents. It caused a furor - "some board members opposed to the dictionary said they had received threatening telephone calls and one member said his dog had been poisoned." (Dateline Cedar Lake, IN) //DR. CHARLES DUDGEON sent in a small newspaper cut headed "Virile Bull Dies" and continuing; "Fond Memory, internally known show bull..." Yes, indeedy.//BOB TUCKER sends one datelined "Belton, SC". The pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church has opposed the construction of a city swimming pool on the grounds that it would lead to lust and become a "cesspool of sin". He's quoted as saying "I am opposed to mixed bathing. I think it leads to lust and sin when men and women are improperly dressed."//Tucker also sends a two-page sheet which it would be almost worthwhile to quote entire. It's a membership ad for "Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan" and most of it seems to be devoted to all the terrible ways the author had been shafted by the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Realm of Louisiana, before organizing his own group. Tucker says he was reminded of Claude Degler (why does he immediately think of an Indiana fan?) while I was more reminded of the WSFS, Inc. brawl (why do I immediately think of New York fans?). The only Klan activity mentioned was "returning in triumph" after offering support to the Plains, Georgia, Baptist church. They don't even claim the support was accepted.//Interesting that the Police Foundation report says that criminals don't use Saturday Night Special handguns in their crimes - since they steal the guns anyway, they settle for nothing but the best. The most popular criminal weapon is the Smith & Wesson, with Colt ranking second. They also point out that nobody is doing anything about gun thefts, not that anyone is going to pay attention. Stopping thefts doesn't get anyone headlines.//The Franklin Mint's idea of selling suckers the greatest American books without bothering to say in advance what they are must have been a success. Now the Easton Press is offering "The 100 Greatest Books Ever Written", also sight unseen - though they do offer to give you a list of the books after you've subscribed, which is more than Franklin did. (Theoretically, you can then tell them not to send any titles you don't want..of course, like most book clubs they'll send them anyway and you can get into a hassle with them.)\$29.75 per book. And Franklin comes back with "The Greatest Books of Our Time - Personally Autographed By Their Authors". This time they do give you at least some of the titles; great literature such as ADVISE AND CONSENT, THE GROUP, THE WAPSHOT CHRONICLE, THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY, and suchlike. \$46.75 for these; autographs come high. //On the subject of book ads, I got one from Doubleday. The envelope said "The Executive Program" and "Now! The career-oriented books you need right now - at extraordinary savings!" I opened it - I always open these things, they appeal to my Sense of Wonder - and inside was a flyer and a membership application for the Early Learning Book Club - items like DO-IT-YOURSELF DINOSAURS, KIDS' STUFF READING AND LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES: Primary Level, LET'S PLAY MATH, DANCE-A-FOLK-SONG, etc. Just how old are Doubleday's executives, Sharon?//I got a sort of final sales list from Laser Books and note that they're trying to keep Piers Anthony happy; in their sale sheet, they've taken his name off the book and left mine. I wonder if that was exactly what he meant?//The U. S. Historical Society is an organization for patriots with money. They have issued, in a limited, numbered edition, the American Independence Sword. Initial offer was for \$2500, but after March 1 the price went up to \$3000. If you don't have quite that much money, they also have the George Washington Presentation Dagger, at only \$450 after March 1. Both pieces of cutlery are made by Wilkinson Sword Ltd., which seems an odd choice for a Revolutionary War commemorative.... Bygones will be bygones and all that, but really....//SANDRA MIESEL sends an ad for Betamax, the video recorder. Shows a page from a tv listing with two items circled and the ad says now you can watch two shows that are shown at the same

time by taping one. The listed shows sound like Ron Goulart wrote the ad; I was particularly fond of "The Young Anesthetologists"; Sandra seemed to favor "Romeo in Joliet", a fun show about prison life. Check the ad if you get a chance.// REG SMITH sends a clipping on a California crime spree: "1 Slain at OC Concert", "HB Man Held By Police in Knifing Attack", "Fate of Accused 12-year-old Slayer To Be Decided". All knife assaults. The paper comments sarcastically on the need for a knife-control law.//LEIGH COUCH sends an absolutely fascinating report on MidAmeriCon from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. It's not only highly favorable to fandom; it's understanding, which is even more remarkable for a non-fan writer. The author, Philip Shreffler, is listed as a "free-lance writer"; may he become a wealthy free-lance writer.//SANDRA MIESEL sends an item from CHEMICAL & ENGINEERING NEWS about "a customer who had an iron fence that held a strange attraction for the entire canine population of the neighborhood. The paint on the fence in consequence was peeling away at a dismaying rate..." No, he didn't want a dog repellent, for some reason; he wanted paint that would hold up under...ah..unusual climactic conditions? Anyway, he got his paint, and it worked, and he offered to give the paint company a testimonial on national tv. The company, at last report, was still considering the offer...//MARY SCHAUB sends a batch of stuff. Saudi Arabia is reported as dickering with a French engineering firm to tow an iceberg into the Red Sea to provide fresh water for the desert. Estimated cost: \$80,000,000. / Someone else is offering an "Irreplaceable Giant Redwood Log, hollowed out into a beautiful home" for only \$120,000. A bargain.../Switzerland is bringing out a new currency series with an embossed code on each bill to allow blind people to tell the denomination./Then there's a long article on Barbara Cartland. After describing her standard plot, Cartland has the grace to admit, "It would be a crashing bore in real life." It's a crashing bore in her books, too, but they sell./And an article on the need of translation experts by businesses in international trade. Not just somebody who can translate word for word, but someone who knows the slang meanings and common interpretations. (Examples are a Russian ad by Otis Engineering which promised that its oil well equipment would improve one's sex life, a Parker Pen ad in Latin America that maintained that their new ink would prevent unwanted pregnancies, and an auto battery ad for Venezuela that was translated literally from the English and said the battery was "highly overrated".) I've been in that fix; in translating installation instructions for an electric furnace into Spanish, I instructed the installer to burn the ground when I intended to tell him to ground the burner. Fortunately, that one got caught. (And my excuse was that not only wasn't I a translator but I don't know any Spanish...I suspect some Japanese firms are employing my equivalents to turn out English-language instructions.)//DON & MAGGIE THOMPSON send another batch, including one about a bunch of homing pigeons used to publicize the Meadowlands sports complex near New York. The pigeons were turned loose from the Empire State Building, and it was estimated that in 10 minutes or so they should have arrived at the complex. You know what happened, of course; eight birds took 1 hour 47 minutes to arrive, the ninth came in 5 minutes later, and the tenth never arrived at all. Somebody is going to have to do something about New York traffic./And there's one from NEWSWEEK about an Arkansas hot lunch program (in a high school) where the kids wouldn't eat the food. So the school gave up and now has their hot lunch program catered by McDonald's. (Have you considered trying that at your school, Linda?)//I think someone, a couple of years ago, wanted information on the Flat Earth Society. Someone else, some time later, sent in an address, which I lost. It has now come to light: International Flat Earth Research Society, Box 2533, Lancaster, CA 93534. Founded 1800; 100 members. (Now I wonder what the original question was?)//ALAN DODD sends one on the British telephone company - operated by the Post Office, over there. They have been charging up to £100 to install telephones in areas "where there are bad payers". Some of it is a deposit and is eventually refunded - which isn't much help if you're trying to live on a British salary and get a phone installed.//ALEXANDER YUDENITSCH sends a Brazilian ad for Novus calculators; my knowledge of Portuguese is less than my knowledge of Spanish, but it seems to be saying

that if you use their machines you can calculate like Werner von Braun or Isaac Asimov (plus a couple of Brazilian names I don't recognize). Interesting that Ike would have that much drawing power down thataway. //ALAN LANKIN sends an article on gothics which incidentally reveals that Thomas M. Disch wrote at least one under the pseudonym "Leonie Hargrave". (The author finds it one of the few acceptable books in the entire genre.) //ALAN DODD sends an ad for chambermaids; "Live in our out. Male or female." Equal opportunity, or just desperation, I wonder? / Also a properly horrified look at British airguns - "millions of these potentially lethal weapons are in homes throughout the country without any possibility of a check being made on them." (Horrors!) The manufacturers are reminiscent of the US variety: "All our guns are carefully inspected to make sure they do not exceed their specifications." But despite industrial vigilance, "new laws to curb youngsters possessing guns are being drawn up". //The Fort Wayne paper had a lovely Lynch cartoon about recent Hoosier pollution. "Long ago, when grandma was a little girl, folks would wash their clothes along the banks of the Ohio River. Now there's carbon tetrachloride in the Ohio, so folks can do their dry cleaning as well..." //MARY SCHAUB sends an article on cactus rustling (anyone who replies "what else can a cactus do?" will be ostracized) in Arizona. Seems the giant saguaro is worth \$10 per foot (of height, one assumes) in this country, and up to \$40 per in Japan. So people are tooling around the desert in various vehicles, cactus-nabbing for a tidy if illegal profit. Sort of fits in with the big worm rustling operating in - where was that, Idaho? / Then there is Mary's clipping about a Hong Kong importer who is interested in buying 40,000 pounds of US chicken wings, turkey gizzards and duck feet. (I suggested a new Chinese satellite, designed for water landing and recovery. But it could equally be a movie idea - Poultryzilla?) / And the Dial-A___ fad seems to be increasing. You can now Dial-A-Joke, -Horoscope, -Dow-Jones Report, -Prayer, or the most popular, Off Track Betting Results. Mary thought I should be interested in the Dial-A-Grump cartoon at the head of the column. Yes... //And a clipping from ALAN DODD, noting that Captain Bligh's log is being auctioned at Christie's; estimated selling price between £30,000 and £50,000. It's been in the Bligh family up till now, apparently. //LESTER BOUTILLIER sends in a batch of quotes. These were originally in the "Action" column of the St. Petersburg Independent, and have already been reprinted in Alan Hutchinson's fanzine CUSHLAMOCHREE. So while Lester included about a pagefull, I'm restricting this to the shorter items; reprinting from a fanzine doesn't seem quite kosher. (And be sure to remember that you're getting these courtesy of Hutchinson's keen observation, not mine.) "Can a Zenith color TV set be operated in reverse so the person being viewed on the screen can see the viewer?" / "I need information on how to contact Benjamin Franklin. I really want to talk to him." (I hope the "Action" columnist recommended Jeanne Dixon.) / "I want to know where a person can find cast iron bottoms as I've looked everywhere for one." / "Thirty years ago, shortly after I got married, someone knocked on my door and said my husband was dead. I've never heard anything since. Do you think I should look into this?" (And that one has all the earmarks of a collegiate missive; it's too contrived. I think the others are weird enough to be genuine.) //GENE DEWEESE sends a Xerox of an article from Racing At Sea, written by Robert Coulson. This seems to be a fourth literary individual of that name. "Bobby Coulson... is one of the most gifted and successful of the younger crop of American blue water skippers." Which rules out all of the other three, as far as I know. (He does say he is a lawyer, though, so he might be the author of the legal book I have by Robert Coulson; maybe there are only three of us, with the other two being versatile - one does hunting and political articles; the other does legal and sailing ones.) //Ballantine Books is going after the science fiction course business, with their "Cosmic Classroom", "A Totally Co-Ordinated Program of Titles, Authors, Tape Cassettes, Teaching Guides and Student Worksheets". Each kit (there are 4 different ones) contains 15 paperbacks, one cassette tape (apparently interviews with authors or speeches by authors), The Ballantine Teachers' Guide To Science Fiction, and ditto masters, for \$44.00. Interesting..... // RSC